Diplomacy of Discontent. Arms Control in Islamic Irans Foreign Policy.

Pirseyedi, Bobi

DIPLOMACY OF DISCONTENT

Arms Control in Islamic Iran's Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

Since its revolution of 1979, Iran has been widely viewed as a threat to regional and international security. Partly as a result of this perception of Islamic Iran, there exists a large body of research literature focusing on Iran's foreign and security policies in the post-1979 era. However, the existing analyses of Iranian state behaviour have paid very little attention to the Islamic Republic's actions in the area of arms control diplomacy. For the most part, Iran's arms control operations have been considered by scholars as insincere attempts to hide, defend, or promote the Islamic Republic's military and armament policies and, therefore, as largely irrelevant to real understanding of Iran's foreign and security policy behaviour.

While such observations have contained an element of truth, this study empirically demonstrates that arms control diplomacy has actually acted as an important component of Iran's foreign policy under the Islamic Republic. Iranian officials have resorted to arms control diplomacy in order to address a wide variety of challenges that have emanated from the Islamic Republic's external environment. Moreover, an analysis of Iran's arms control operations in the course of 1979–2003, the time period under consideration in the present work, shows that the Iranians have used arms control diplomacy as an instrument to promote a multitude of foreign policy objectives that have stemmed from the Islamic Republic's security, power, economic, ideological, and prestige interests.

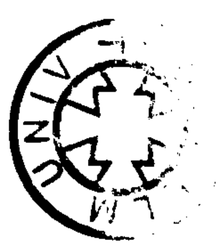
Although the identification and analysis of such objectives and interests constitute a key element of the present work, this study primarily focuses on identifying and reconstructing Islamic Iran's diplomatic operations in four individual thematic areas, that is, conventional, chemical, biological, and nuclear arms control. Apart from discussing the substantive content of, and contextualizing, the Iranian operations in each of the four cases, the present work looks at the means by which Iranian authorities have tried to realize their arms control objectives. Finally, this study tentatively examines to what extent the content, objectives, and means of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations – together with the level of diplomatic effort put into those operations – have changed during the 1979–2003 period.

Methodologically, the present work is founded on a broad range of primary sources, most of which consist of official statements made by the Iranian government in multilateral diplomatic fora dealing with arms control and security matters. This study

also draws on the records of various international arms control organs and fora, in addition to which it makes use of pronouncements made by Iranian officials in other contexts, of written material produced by the Iranians – for example, in the form of press releases, memoranda, and position papers – as well as of the author's personal interchange, interviews and correspondence, with Iranian arms control officials.

This work constitutes the first comprehensive discussion of Iran's arms control policy under the Islamic Republic. As such, it fills a void in contemporary scholarship on Iran and lays the foundation for further research on that country's diplomatic operations in the area of arms control.

In memory of Seyyed Hossein Pirseyedi, my father and best friend



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ACRS	Arms Control and Regional Security (working group on)
AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
AG	Australia Group
AHG	Ad Hoc Group
APM	Anti-Personnel Mines
BTWC	Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
CBM	Confidence-Building Measures
CD	Conference on Disarmament
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CTB	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	CTBT Organization
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
EC	Expediency Council
EIF	Entry Into Force
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
FMT	Fissile Material Treaty
GC	Guardian Council
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HCRI	High Center for Research and Informatics
HEU	Highly Enriched Uranium
HNE	Hydronuclear Experiments
HWR	Heavy-Water Nuclear Reactors
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICOC	International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation
IDC	International Data Centre
IMS	International Monitoring System
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
IR	International Relations (academic discipline of)

IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps
LWR	Light-Water Nuclear Reactors
MAD	Mutual Assured Destruction
MBT	Mine-Ban Treaty
MKO	Mujahidin-i Khalq Organization
MOIS	Ministry of Intelligence and Security
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCRI	National Council of Resistance of Iran
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NMD	National Missile Defense
NNWS	Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (as defined under the NPT)
NOD	Non-Offensive Defence
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	Negative Security Assurances
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NTM	National Technical Means
NWC	Nuclear Weapons Convention
NWFZ	Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones
NWS	Nuclear-Weapon States (as defined under the NPT)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OPBW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSI	On-Site Inspections
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosions
PREPCOM	Preparatory Commission of the OPCW
PSA	Positive Security Assurances
PTBT	Partial Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SDC	Supreme Defence Council
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative

SNSC	Supreme National Security Council
SORT	Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
SSM	Surface-to-Surface Missiles
SSOD	Special Sessions on Disarmament
TMD	Theater Missile Defence
UN	United Nations
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
VEREX	Verification Experts Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WMDFZ	Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zones

1 INTRODUCTION: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 The Broadening Notion of National Security

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the bipolar international system marked the latest monumental turning point in the history of international relations. Just like previous epoch-making transformations of world politics, the end of the Cold War forced statesmen and students of international relations alike to reexamine their views about the world around them. For statesmen, the primary challenge was to figure out what impact the dramatic changes in the international system had on their countries' position in that system and on their foreign policy objectives. For the scholars of the academic discipline of International Relations (IR), the end of the Cold War amounted to a major intellectual test that in many respects problematized the discipline's assumptions, findings, and research agenda.[1]

Debate on state or national security has become one of the discourses that has been informed by the puzzle of what has changed and stayed the same in international relations in the post-Cold War era.[2] For the most part, the debate has centered around the types of dangers that are believed to threaten states' core values. Two broad lines of thinking have emerged in this context. According to one school, the so-called traditionalists, threats to national security in the post-Cold War world continue to essentially consist of military ones. Even though the traditionalists have recognized the need for modifications in states' security thinking and policy agendas, their calls for redefinition have focused on changes in the nature of the use of military force.

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[1] Apart from the sea changes that have taken place in international relations, theoretical deliberations within IR have historically been strongly influenced by developments within the philosophy of science and the philosophy of social science. For this influence, see Wight (2002) who shows how IR scholars have turned to philosophy in order to obtain conceptual tools for empirical research, to legitimate their scientific practices, and to develop the self-image of their discipline. For the various schools of thought or (general) theories of international relations in IR and their ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises, see, for example, the anthology edited by Kegley (1995), the relevant essays in the volume edited by Baylis and Smith (2001), and Burchill et al. (2005). Kolodziej (2005) examines how well these theories, treated as schools of security thinking, have been able to explain the beginning, the evolution, and the end of the Cold War.

[2] The term 'security' is used here to denote a state where there is a "low probability of damage" to an object's "acquired values" (Baldwin 1997: 13). Following Buzan (1991: 69–96), states, as "referent objects for security," can be said to have three fundamental values: (a) the idea of the state, establishing the state's legitimacy in the minds of its population; (b) the physical base of the state; and (c) the institutions of the state, referring both to the state's governmental organs and to the norms, laws, and procedures by which those bodies operate.

Topics such as the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA) – a term pointing to the major advances made in conventional weapons technology and to the associated changes that have occurred in military organizations and operational concepts – and the notion that war has become virtual or "postmodern" are examples of subjects that have occupied the traditionalists' minds (Angstrom 2005: 15–18).[3] Also, the traditionalists have paid attention to the problem of intra-state wars. While emphasizing the endurance of state-to-state military conflicts in the international system, they have increasingly recognized the destructive consequences of armed conflicts occurring within states. In addition to causing major suffering in the conflict areas, internal conflicts can have a direct impact on neighboring countries' and even distant powers' security interests.

In the view of the so-called wideners, those calling for a broader notion of national security, the traditionalists' emphasis on military issues, even when expanded from the conventional state-to-state perspective to internal conflicts, presents only a partial picture of reality and, therefore, an inadequate foundation for policy-making and analysis.[4] Although acknowledging the existence and relevance of military concerns, the wideners stress that there are many non-military issues – in the economic and environmental realms, for example – that need to be treated and defined as threats to states' core values. Many wideners, especially those from academia, have taken their argumentation further by attacking the traditionalists' intellectual identification with the school of political realism in IR. According to them, the realist worldview's portrayal of international relations as a zero-sum game blurs the fact that states cannot cope with serious security threats such as the climate change, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), or the spread of diseases without extensive international cooperation.[5]

Moreover, the wideners have attacked political realism on the grounds that beside being analytically flawed, its position as the dominant school of thought among decision-makers and IR scholars makes it a significant obstacle to new approaches to security. The argumentation of the so-called critical theorists is a good example of

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[3] The idea of postmodern war is based on the observation that the wars waged by the technologically superior Western powers have become more of a media event than a stirring experience for those societies (Angstrom 2005: 16–17).

[4] It needs to be noted, though, that the calls for a broadened notion of security are not uniquely a post-Cold War phenomenon. They emanate from the 1970s and the 1980s and were originally linked to the rise of economic and environmental agendas in international relations (Buzan et al. 1998: 2).

[5] This is the argument, among others, of the so-called globalists who underscore the complexity and interconnectedness of security problems in the post-Cold War world. For the globalist approach, see, for example, Baylis (2001: 269–270) and Hakovirta (2002: 57–74).

theorizing that has challenged traditional security thinking. Relying on the idea that knowledge claims are political, that they always reflect certain assumptions and interests, critical security theorists have sought to expose the factors that have driven traditional security thinking and to reflect on the social and political implications of the ruling realist discourse. This method has been viewed by them as a means to proceed towards the normative goal of surpassing the theoretical and practical limits set by political realism's intellectual hegemony and striving for a better, just world order. For critical security theorists, the key normative question is how to replace the predominant conception of security, its focus on states' needs and the military component of security, with a new approach that takes the individual as the central unit of analysis and recognizes the multiple dimensions of security.[6] (Laitinen 1999: 68–78; Devetak 2005 and Baylis 2001: 266.)

Critical theorists' conceptualization of security illustrates, for its part, that contemporary debate on security, and particularly its academic offshoot, has broken away from the Cold War era security discourse criticized by many as state-centric and obsessed with military issues (Baylis and Wirtz 2002: 8–11). Today's security debate resembles a marketplace of ideas where multiple 'sellers' of security notions, whether politicians or analysts, compete for the attention of the 'buyers' in order to influence practical security policies or the ways in which security, as an "autonomous domain of human behaviour" (Kolodziej 2005: 2), is being studied. The 'goods' offered in this intellectual marketplace revolve around two principal themes: first, around the question of the content of security and, secondly, around the question of the most appropriate referent object for security analysis.

As far as the first theme is concerned, the sectoral approach to security put forth by Buzan (1991: 116–134) and Buzan et. al (1998) provides an analytical framework that illustrates the kinds of factors that have been identified as security threats by the participants of the post-Cold War security debate. It discerns five analytically distinct sectors of interaction from which threats to a referent object's security may arise: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors.[7] As for the second

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[6] Critical theorists are not the only wideners that have distanced themselves from the concept of national security as the point of departure for security analysis. Some, for example, have argued that the nature of today's security challenges necessitates an approach that gives priority to "world interests" and "world security policy" (Brown 1998: 10–16).

[7] As explained by Buzan et al. (1998: 7): "[...] the military sector is about relationships of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationships of authority, governing status, and recognition; the economic sector is about relationships of trade, production, and finance; the societal sector is about

theme, there are five different levels of analysis where referent objects for security can be found – that is, the level of international systems, international subsystems, units, subunits, and individuals (Buzan et al. 1998: 5–6).[8]

1.2 The Middle East: The Primacy of Military and Political Security

Despite the unquestionable impact the wideners have had on the way in which contemporary practitioners and students of international relations view the issue of security, the traditional state-centric approach focusing on military security is strongly alive. Indeed, one influential security-related observation of the post-Cold War era, the so-called two worlds thesis, suggests that the broadened notion of security has significant practical and analytical relevance only in certain regions of the world.

According to the thesis, the post-Cold War international system is divided into two parts. The first part, the so-called zone of peace, consists of advanced industrial democracies or the Western world and is characterized by the absence of war within it. Mutual interdependence, the two worlds argument posits, has greatly diminished the role and importance of military issues in the zone of peace and led to increased questioning of the primacy of the state as a referent object for security therein. In the other part, the non-Western "zone of conflict," the situation is dramatically different. Comprised mainly of Third World countries, the zone of conflict suffers from poverty, dependence on the Western world, and from numerous military conflicts, both intra- and inter-state. Relations between the members of the zone of conflict, the two worlds argument goes on, are regulated by the rules of power politics, and the survival of the state, its military security, is the zone members' overriding concern and objective.[9]

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relationships of collective identity; and the environmental sector is about relationships between human activity and the planetary biosphere."

[8] By international systems, Buzan et al. (1998: 5–6) refer to the "largest conglomerates of interacting or interdependent units that have no system level above them" and by international subsystems to "groups of units within the international system that can be distinguished from the entire system by the particular nature or intensity of their interactions with or interdependence on each other." As an example of international subsystems, they refer to inter-governmental organizations, whereas states, nations, and transnational firms are given as examples of units and bureaucracies and lobbies as examples of subunits.

[9] For various versions of the two worlds thesis, see Goldgeier and McFaul (1992) who name the constituent parts as the "core" and the "periphery," Dessouki (1993) who speaks of "two zones of international relations and two spheres of international security," and Buzan (1998) who uses the terms "zone of peace" and "zone of conflict." Rothgeb's (1995) characterization of "parallel international universes" reflects the same idea, whereas Holsti (1996: 141–149) adds a third category to the model by dividing the international system into "zones of war," "no-war zones," and "zones of peace." In suggesting that the state of political relations within a specific region determines the nature and purposes of arms control activities therein, Daalder's (1992) conceptual distinction between cooperative and

That the Middle East is often used as an example of a Third World region belonging to the zone of conflict is hardly surprising. For decades, the region has been a theater of violent internal, regional, and international conflicts. As observed by Hinnebusch (2003: 1), "the Middle East is arguably the epicentre of world crisis, chronically war-prone and the site of the world's most protracted conflicts."[10] Internally, most Middle Eastern countries suffer from a low level of social cohesion, and the legitimacy of the regional states and rulers is being constantly challenged from within. These conditions are maintained not only by local and international factors, but also by historical legacies of the colonial era. The external imposition of the current state order on the region and the often arbitrary state boundaries that resulted therefrom, in particular, have hampered the process of state formation and consolidation in the Middle East.[11] (Ibid.: 54–58, 73–90 and Ayoob 1991: 267–273)

Due to the fact that many people in the Middle East find it difficult to identify themselves with their states and rulers, and given that many of them are prepared to resort to political activism, either violent or non-violent, in order to air their dissatisfaction and grievances, the maintenance of domestic security ranks very high on local governments' security agendas. This state of affairs inevitably creates and sustains

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competitive approaches to arms control is closely related to the two worlds thesis. According to Daalder, a cooperative approach to arms control is applicable to states with largely compatible political and security interests, and its focus is on improving the political relations among states. A competitive approach to arms control, in turn, is applicable to states with fundamentally different political and security interests and it centers around the immediate objective of reducing the risk of war.

[10] Similarly, Halliday (2005: 173) notes that "even if the incidence of inter-state war is taken as the sole basis of comparative judgement, of any region of the world, the Middle East had the most conflict-ridden record in the second half of the twentieth century." To Tibi (1998: 42), the Middle East is the "principal trouble spot in world politics," whereas Buzan and Wæver (2003: 187) depict the region as a "perennial conflict formation." However, the conflictual nature of the Middle Eastern regional system and the dominance of politico-military considerations in Middle Eastern security thinking does not mean that the broad notion of security has remained totally uninfluential in the region. On the contrary, the regional decision-makers have increasingly recognized the role of other than military and political threats to their countries' national security, and the local intellectuals, politicians, and businessmen identified with the line of thought referred to as "Middle Easternism," for example, have drawn attention to the regional states' interdependence and called for the transformation of the regional agenda dominated by political and military issues (Sivan 1998: 193). For scholarly discussions that stress the relevance of the broad notion of security in the Middle Eastern context, see the volumes edited by Korany et al. (1993), Martin (1999) and Jacoby and Sasley (2002).

[11] The two meanings given to the concept of state by Halliday (2005: 46) is illuminating in this connection. By "national-territorial state," Halliday refers to state as a territorial entity, an "undifferentiated unit," whereas his "organisational or institutional" definition of the state points to the ruling institutions – the government, ministries and administration – of a country. Based on this conceptualization, it can be concluded that, in the Middle East, state legitimacy is being domestically questioned in both senses. In other words, the challenges to state legitimacy stem, on the one hand, from dissatisfaction with issues that pertain to the national-territorial dimension of the state (such as the boundaries and the ethnic composition of the regional states) and, on the other hand, from dissatisfaction with the way in which the regional countries are being ruled by the local elites (that is, with the institutional aspect of the state).

a constellation in which the definitions given to national security by the rulers and the ruled frequently clash. Whereas state authorities' definition of national security often takes the ruling regimes' political and physical survival as the starting point, thereby effectively equating national security with regime security, the opponents of those regimes view the governments themselves as the essential security threat.[12]

While having their own dynamics, internal conflicts in the Middle East and other parts of the Third World frequently contribute to and mesh with regional inter-state tensions. Ethnic, religious, and other kinds of interests and identities that cross national borders in much of the developing world provide regional states and other actors with an easy opportunity to interfere, for whatever reason, in neighbouring countries' internal conflicts. Conversely, cross-border interests and loyalties can produce effects that go in the opposite direction. Because of the links that defy state boundaries – which, as the contemporary history of the Middle East illustrates, do not necessarily have to be based on feelings of amity but can stem alone from power-political interests that bind various actors –, internal conflicts may drag neighbouring countries into these crises and spark inter-state conflicts. In both scenarios, then, there is a direct link between intra-state or regime stability and regional security. (Ayoob 1991: 263–264; David 1991: 240–241 and Maoz 1997: 25)

As far as other factors that have fuelled inter-state conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere in the developing world are concerned, they have been plentiful and ranged from power aspirations and ideological confrontations to territorial disputes and historic mistrust. As the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict illustrates, some of these conflicts have centered around issues that were inherited unresolved from the colonial period. The Arab-Israeli wars of 1948–1949, 1956, 1967, 1973, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 also demonstrate how the occurance of war has complicated the resolution of original issues of contention by creating new grievancies and disputes between the conflicting parties. Furthermore, the conflicting parties' efforts to accumulate military tools against each other have generated a momentum of their own and strengthened

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[12] Speaking of the developing world in general, Ayoob (1991 and 1995) argues that Third World governments' national security problems are mostly domestic and related to regime security. David (1991), focusing specifically on Third World countries' alignment behaviour, reaches a similar conclusion. According to him, Third World leaders' primary aim is to stay in power. This objective, David claims, is not only the most powerful determinant of their alignment behaviour, but presumably strongly steers other aspects of their foreign and domestic policies as well. Both Ayoob and David offer their findings as important contributions to mainstream IR literature which, in their view, has paid too little attention to Third World states as units of analysis. For other scholars noting that mainstream IR

those parties' already deep mutual suspicions. (Ayoob 1991: 271–276; Hinnebusch 2003: 9, 154–155 and Halliday 2005: 67–68)

Regional conflicts rarely take place in international isolation but are linked in multiple ways to the wider international system. Most Third World states, for example, depend for their military capabilities on the assistance they receive from the powerful members of the international community. Also, the major powers often have a direct interest in the outcomes of regional conflicts and consequently get involved in them. While the actual conflicting parties may succeed in playing out such extra-regional involvement and the major power competition at the international level to their own advantage, outside interference can also critically curtail those parties' political and military room of manoeuvre.

From the perspective of Third World states, then, great power involvement in regional conflicts and in regional affairs in general constitutes a major security problem in its own right. During the Cold War, for example, the Middle East acted, after Europe and Asia, as the "third front" in the superpowers' global rivalry over military, political, economic, and ideological preponderance (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 197). After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Middle Eastern states have been worried about the economic, political, and socio-cultural developments associated with the process of globalization. For the most part, they have seen globalization as a phenomenon that increases their vulnerabilities and dependencies vis-à-vis extra-regional actors and Western countries, in particular. Not infrequently, Middle Eastern governments have equated globalization with the military hegemony of the United States. (Dodge and Higgott 2002: 15–17 and Halliday 2002: 45–56 and 2005: 132–133, 314–315)

The security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran (hereafter the Islamic Republic), a key Middle Eastern power and the subject matter of this study, shares the characteristics peculiar to Middle Eastern countries in general. The Islamic Republic's interaction with state and non-state actors in regional and international contexts subjects it to developments that create threats to its national security. And like many of its regional counterparts, the Islamic Republic suffers from domestic security problems which occupy a central role on its security policy agenda. The extent to which threats, actual or perceived, emanating from Iran's domestic, regional, and international

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research has analytically ignored the Third World or approached it with theories and concepts developed in Western contexts, see Neuman (1998: 1–2), Lemke (2002: 3–7) and Jacoby and Sasley (2002: 1–3).

environments have preoccupied the authorities of the Islamic Republic is captured by Sariolghalam (2003: 73) who observes that "from its birth in 1979 until the present, security has remained an obsession for the Islamic Republic." This Iranian inclination lends credence to Ayoob's (1995: 191) conclusion that security considerations dominate the domestic as well as the foreign policies of Third World states.

However, Islamic Iran is not only an object of various kinds of security threats but also a state that itself is considered a security problem by a number of domestic, regional, and international actors. The view of the Iranian state as a threat is based, first and foremost, on the Islamic Republic's self-perception and behaviour as a revolutionary state. Following the Iranian revolution of 1979,[13] the country's new power-holders sharply distanced themselves from the policies of the ousted Pahlavi regime and devised a new course for the country in domestic politics and foreign relations. Thus, the representatives of the Islamic Republic, a polity formally established after a national referendum in March 1979, did not settle for the transformation of the Iranian society into a mirror image of their worldview, an effort that inevitably generated opposition among some segments of the Iranian population, but wanted to correct what they viewed as the ills of the international system as well.

Born in the middle of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic strongly disapproved of the superpowers' hegemony in international relations and openly challenged them by adopting a foreign policy orientation[14] that was claimed to be independent and guided by religious principles. In a

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[13] The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the question of what caused the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy has generated a considerable body of scholarly literature. In a recent study on the topic, Kurzman (2004) argues that five main types of explanation for the Iranian revolution can be discerned. The political explanations of the revolution have emphasized how the Pahlavi regime's limited liberalization of Iran's domestic political arena in the face of internal and international pressure enabled the country's opposition forces to successfully challenge the monarchy. According to organizational explanations of the revolution, it was the Iranian opposition's ability to mobilize a nationwide movement against the government that proved to be decisive in the Shah's fall from power. The cultural explanations of the Iranian revolution, in turn, have laid stress on the role of societal – principally religious – norms, ideologies, beliefs, and rituals in the revolutionary process, whereas economic explanations of the 1979 revolution have been founded on the general observation that revolutions occur when economic problems get worse, especially after a period of relative prosperity. Finally, those who have adhered to the military explanation of the Iranian revolution have referred to the paralysis of the Shah's machinery of violence in the middle of internal turmoil as the ultimate reason for the downfall of the Pahlavi regime. Kurzman himself, after weighing each of the above explanations, stresses their shortcomings and finds them only partially valid. For other discussions of the Iranian revolution, see, for example, Bakhash (1984), Arjomand (1988), and Milani (1988).

[14] The term 'foreign policy orientation' refers to a country's general orientation towards the rest of the world. It encompasses a state's general attitudes and commitments towards its external environment as well as its fundamental strategy for accomplishing foreign policy objectives and goals and for coping with persistent threats. (Holsti 1977: 109)

similar manner, the leaders of the Islamic Republic expressed their dissatisfaction with the prevailing conditions in the Middle East and did not hide their interest in subverting the regional status quo. Moreover, Iran's leaders declared that their country was willing to lend its helping hand to all the "oppressed" of the world and even went so far as speaking of a world united and ruled by their idiosyncratic interpretation of Islam. The Islamic Republic's assertive and intransigent posture, together with the fact that its representatives did not shy away from using violent measures to promote their domestic and foreign policies, cemented the image of the post-revolutionary Iranian state as a militant and dangerous actor.

Although ever since the end of the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq war, itself partially a result of Iran's revolutionary foreign policy,[15] and the death in 1989 of Ayatollah Khomeini, the architect and chief symbol of the Islamic Republic, Iran has moderated its revolutionary temper both domestically and internationally, perceptions of the Islamic Republic as a dubious and an untrustworthy actor persist in the post-Cold War era. While these perceptions are kept alive by political memories and by the clashes of interest between Islamic Iran and other international actors, they are further maintained by the fact that Iranian decision-makers have not been willing to rid their country from the status of a revolutionary state. As observed by Halliday (1990: 215), as long as revolutionary states' internal orders remain intact, they continue to pose challenges to other states.

Even after the end of the Cold War and the ideologically fervent phase of Iranian policies, then, Iran continues to be identified with three main phenomena that have crucially moulded, legitimately or not, outside threat perceptions of the Islamic Republic: radical Islam, terrorism, and WMD. Particularly in the West and the Middle East, Iran is viewed as a state sponsor of radical Islamic movements, as an actor that itself resorts to and helps others to carry out terrorist activities, and as a regime that pursues WMD. That the Islamic Republic continues – by challenging the dominance of the West in world affairs and by defining its national security in relation to the actions of the great powers – to consider itself a player of global relevance contributes to Iran's

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[15] The history of revolutions shows not only that wars have caused revolutions and but also that many revolutions have led to wars (Halliday 1990: 219). Walt (1996) sees the Iran–Iraq war as a textbook example of a war sparked by a revolution. According to him, the 1980–1988 war was essentially caused by two developments set in motion by the Iranian revolution: the alteration of the balance of power between Iran and Iraq and the two parties' increasingly malign perceptions about each other's intentions. Walt notes that revolutionary regimes are usually overly optimistic about the international attractiveness

standing as what Buzan (1991: 299) calls a revisionist state, a country whose actions are seen to raise the level of threat in the international system.

1.3 Islamic Iran and Arms Control: The Research Questions

Islamic Iran's obsession with security and its reputation as a dangerous actor have meant that various dimensions of Iranian state behaviour related to military and political security have drawn steady scholarly interest. The existing body of knowledge on subjects such as the Islamic Republic's armed forces, military capabilities, and military operations contains invaluable data on the Islamic Republic's security-related activities. Despite their unquestionable merits, however, the studies available – in addition to being in some respects outdated – leave some areas crucial for the understanding of Iran's security behaviour uncovered. While the unavailability of necessary sources often explains the gaps in the research literature, some important questions have, for one reason or another, been simply neglected by Iran scholars.

The arms control policy of the Islamic Republic is a good example of a neglected area of inquiry. Here, the main explanation given for the disregarding of the subject – by scholars who have taken the trouble to explain their research choices in the first place – seems to be that the issue is not analytically relevant enough to warrant closer examination. Chubin (1994 and 1997a), for example, implies that Iran does not have the luxury to view arms control as a serious approach to security, and that in the face of its military experiences, the Islamic Republic is in fact highly skeptical about the relevance and benefits of arms control. Thus, Chubin concludes, Iran is "unconcerned with arms control" and merely views it as a means to score propaganda and political points internationally. In a similar manner, Cordesman and Hashim (1997: 310) maintain that "Iran has already shown that it regards arms control as an extension of conflict and rivalry by other means and not as a valid security option." Still another example of an analyst following the same line of argumentation is Saikal (2002: 280) who claims that no Middle Eastern state, including Iran, has been really serious, except in propaganda terms, in its calls for the elimination of WMD in the region.

From an analytical point of view, these observations suffer from two major shortcomings. First, they are not based on proper empirical accounts of Iran's arms

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of their revolutionary message, whereas other states are prone to assume that revolutionary states are internally weak and therefore easy to defeat.

control policies but, instead, principally rely on examinations of Iran's weapons programs. By ignoring the examination of the Islamic Republic's arms control activities, thus, the foregoing observers imply a priori, without sufficient evidence, that closer inquiries into those activities would not significantly add up to the understanding of the Islamic Republic's national security policy.

Secondly, even though the observation that Iran uses arms control for propaganda and political purposes captures some aspects of the goal-setting of the Islamic Republic's arms control policies, such a conclusion begs an immediate counter-question: supposed that the purposes of Iran's arms control operations were limited to propaganda and political posturing, and irrespective of whether such an assumption would be analytically legitimate, do these objectives not, in their own right, illustrate that arms control has certain roles to play in Islamic Iran's security policy? Hence: should the examination of Iran's arms control policy and the explanation of the roles it plays not be included in the analysis of Iranian state behaviour?

The existing, and indeed extremely limited, research literature on the Islamic Republic's arms control policy has not been capable of filling the analytical gaps referred to. For example, the study by Ali (1996), perhaps the most detailed examination of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy to date, captures certain key elements of Iran's arms control stances as well as some of the Iranian policies' main characteristics, but fails to place them into a proper historical context and to demonstrate, among others, how Iran's arms control argumentation has come into being and evolved. And although Ali correctly argues that "the Iranian leadership sees Iran's participation in arms control as an avenue to achieve multiple political, military, and economic goals," he provides only a limited discussion of them and does not establish a clear empirical connection between those goals and the Islamic Republic's arms control activities. A further obvious weakness of Ali's study is that it ignores the valuable data provided by the primary sources available and relies almost exclusively on secondary sources. While Jones' (1998) article on Iran's arms control policy, another noteworthy treatment of the subject, gives more weight to primary sources, it nonetheless essentially suffers from the same weaknesses as the study by Ali.

As for other accounts of the Islamic Republic's arms control policies, they do not reach the analytical level of Ali's and Jones' work. Arnett (1998a), for example, in addition to elaborating on Iranian threat perceptions, merely offers a listing of Iran's memberships in various multilateral arms control instruments, whereas the essay by

Etemad (1987) serves as an example of a discussion that superficially touches upon a limited aspect of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy – in his case, Iran's nuclear diplomacy. Finally, the articles by Shahabi (1994) and Sadeghi-Dolatabadi (1995) are representative of brief sympathetic Iranian examinations that, though useful as objects of analysis, concentrate on legitimizing the Islamic Republic's official positions.

Resting on the observation that the Islamic Republic's arms control policy constitutes a research topic and a phenomenon that has been inadequately accounted for, if not completely sidelined, by Iran observers, and based on the claim that knowledge about Iran's arms control activities is a prerequisite for comprehensive understanding of the Islamic Republic's security behaviour, this study has three principal objectives. In the first place, and above all, it aims at identifying and reconstructing Islamic Iran's arms control operations in four individual thematic areas: conventional, chemical, biological, and nuclear arms control. Trying to present and describe Iranian activities in these fields in the time period of 1979–2003, this work discusses the substantive content of those actions and the means by which the Iranians have tried to achieve their arms control objectives. Furthermore, this study seeks to illustrate how Iran's arms control operations have evolved since the time of the 1979 revolution as well as to place them in their proper historical context. Thus, the main tasks set for this case study are of descriptive nature, a feature that places the present work, in terms of problem framing and methodology, among mainstream scholarship in the study of Iranian foreign and security policies, national security studies, and area studies (Katzenstein 1996: 509 and Bates 1997: 167).[16]

The second principal purpose of this work is to distinguish and discuss the objectives that have supposedly steered the Islamic Republic's arms control operations.[17] While the study's primary focus will be on the content of Iran's actions, on the substantive or thematic aspects of the Islamic Republic's arms control argumentation, it also tries to identify the objectives that have presumably guided the Islamic Republic's policy choices in the realm of arms control. Even through the present study does not claim to provide an exhaustive account of the Iranian objectives, or to explain Iran's operations

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[16] For a discussion of various scholarly traditions in Middle Eastern studies, see Halliday (2005: 21–40) who discerns five main research traditions: historical analysis, political realism, foreign policy analysis, approaches that stress the importance of ideas and values in explaining the behaviour of their research objects, and historical and international sociology.

[17] Following Holsti's (1977: 139) definition, the term 'objective' is understood here as an image of a future state of affairs and future set of conditions that the Iranian government, through individual policy-

in the area of arms control, it nonetheless postulates that the objectives subsequently discussed provide us clues about why Iran has acted as it has. Accordingly, they have to be taken in consideration in any serious effort to explain the Islamic Republic's arms control behaviour. Finally, the third principal objective of this research is to tentatively examine to what extent the content, objectives, and means of Iran's arms control operations, as well as the level of diplomatic effort put into those operations, have changed during 1979–2003, the time-period under consideration. Put briefly, the aim is to see whether they have been characterized by continuity or change.

Given that the purpose of this study is to describe, understand, and interpret Iranian security behaviour in a thematically and temporally limited area, and given that this behaviour mainly manifests itself in the form of diplomacy, the subsequent discussion on the Islamic Republic's arms control policies will share many general characteristics with the work carried out by diplomatic historians. Accordingly, while drawing on the theoretical insights of IR literature, this study does not aim at either testing theoretical hypotheses or, more ambitiously, creating them. Yet, by providing an empirical, thoroughly documented account of Iran's arms control operations, it puts analytical building blocks at the disposal of scholars who are striving for theoretical or comparative research results.[18] (Schroeder 1997; Levy 2001 and Halliday 2005: 23–24)

Of course, as a case-explaining analysis or case study,[19] this work seeks, first and foremost, to add to the scholarship on Iran.[20] By shedding light on an overlooked dimension of Islamic Iran's security behaviour, it not only hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies, but it also provides an untypical angle to the study of those policies. Whereas existing studies of Iran's international relations are often based on approaches that divide the totality of such relations into bilateral or regional sub-categories and then proceed to discuss the agendas of issues that define the content and nature of Iranian behaviour in bilateral and

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makers, aspires to bring about. The future state of affairs may refer to concrete conditions, to values, or to the combination of the two.

[18] The research program on "cross-cultural dimensions of multilateral non-proliferation and arms control dialogues," as outlined by Krause (1999), serves as a good example of a scholarly enterprise that can make use of the results of an analysis of Iran's arms control policy. For a general discussion of how area-oriented studies, such as the present one, can contribute to theory-oriented scholarship, see Tessler et al. (1999).

[19] Levy (2001: 48) draws a distinction between three kinds of case studies: case-explaining case studies, hypothesis-testing case studies, and hypothesis-generating case studies.

[20] The research literature on Iran's foreign and security policies consists almost exclusively of historical analyses. For recent studies that have approached the subject of Iran's foreign policy from a markedly theoretical perspective, see Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (1997); Maloney (2002); and Adib-Moghaddam (2005).

regional contexts,[21] this research takes a single issue-area as the analytical point of departure.

Apart from generating knowledge about Islamic Iran's security-related activities and about a particular sector of its foreign policy, and apart from offering a glimpse into Iran's multilateral diplomacy, another topic that has not received the attention of Iran scholars,[22] an examination of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations provides analytical insights that are of relevance to those making general conclusions about the nature and content of Islamic Iran's foreign and security policies. In other words, the issue-based in-depth approach adopted here can strengthen or undermine existing views about the big picture of Iranian state behaviour.

1.4 The Sources and Research Procedures

The term 'arms control policy' can be defined as the regulation and coordination of a state's performative operations in the issue area of arms control by specific ends and means. Accordingly, the present study focuses on the content of Islamic Iran's arms control activities and on the objectives and means that have guided those operations. In doing so, it will take into consideration both the articulations and the deeds made by Iranian authorities that have bearing on the subject matter of arms control.[23] (Palonen 2003: 175; Vesa 1987: 213 and Tibi 1998: 48)

In order to observe and identify Iran's policy statements and concrete policy actions, this work relies on a broad selection of primary sources. Most of them are official statements made by the Islamic Republic in international fora dealing with international security and arms control during the time-period of 1979–2003.[24] The core of the primary sources consists of the following official documents that contain the Iranian

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[21] See, for example, the studies by Chubin and Zabih (1974); Ramazani (1988); and Hunter (1990).

[22] For one expert listing of research topics still unaddressed by the students of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, see Ramazani (2000: 6–7). His suggestion of topics for further research makes no mention of either issue-based research questions or of the scholarly vacuum in the analysis of Iran's multilateral diplomacy.

[23] As pointed out by Hill (2003: 128), state actions are not composed only of physical, concrete set of activities but may also take a purely linguistic form.

[24] Selected documents dating from 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975, and 1978 have also been used. It should be noted here that even though this work covers the time period of 1979–2003, the individual chapters of the study, as well as the single sections within a chapter, have, because of practical and analytical reasons, differing information cut-off dates. Yet, the cut-off dates for individual parts of the work have not been randomly chosen. Instead, they are based on the view that further treatment of the subjects at hand would not have essentially added up to the knowledge of the key features of the Iranian policies during the rest of the 1979–2003 period.

statements: the United Nations (UN) General Assembly plenary meeting records, the records of the meetings of the General Assembly's First Committee, and the plenary meeting records of the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD).[25]

The study also draws on the records of the UN Disarmament Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and other relevant organs of the UN, in addition to which it utilizes official documents pertaining to individual arms control instruments and arrangements such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Finally, the present work relies on pronouncements made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic outside the aforementioned international fora,[26] on other written material produced by Iranian authorities – including press releases, memoranda, and position papers – as well as on personal interchange, interviews and correspondence, with Iranian arms control officials.[27]

As the discussion of the primary sources of the present work implies, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations have mainly consisted of diplomatic steps taken in the context of relevant international arenas. Given that Islamic Iran has actively taken part in different kinds of arms control arrangements and in the work of various discussion fora, most of which are linked one way or the other to the UN, diplomacy has constituted the principal instrument through which the Islamic Republic has sought to attain its arms control objectives.

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[25] The archival research concerning these core sources has included detailed examinations of all General Assembly, First Committee, and CD plenary meeting records from the 1979–2003 period. It is important to note here that a small number of these documents have been summaries and not original versions of the Iranian statements. However, most of the summaries have been cross-checked with original Iranian versions that have been provided to the author either by the representatives of the Islamic Republic themselves or have been obtained from other sources. For this reason, they are treated here as primary sources.

[26] The term 'representatives of the Islamic Republic' is used in the present study to refer to Iranian officials who serve in various capacities in Islamic Iran's state institutions and, in some cases, to apologetic Iranian scholars whose argumentation is identical with that of the Iranian government. The term 'arms control officials of the Islamic Republic,' in turn, refers strictly to the government functionaries who are involved in making decisions on, presenting, executing, or commenting the Islamic Republic's arms control operations.

[27] It should be noted that the translations of the sources used in this study have almost exclusively been made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic or by the relevant international organizations. The translations by the latter have usually been based on those provided or approved by the former. As for the issue of transliteration, the Persian names and terms referred to in this study are presented according to the format of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. However, some names and terms have been presented as they commonly appear in the English literature and media reports. The names and terms appearing in the bibliography follow the transliteration of the original sources, and the transliteration of the names of the people interviewed follows those persons' own spellings.

Also, it should be pointed out that Iran's arms control diplomacy has almost exclusively occurred at the global or multilateral level. Unilateral Iranian arms control declarations have been rare, and with very few exceptions, the Islamic Republic's bilateral relations have not included an arms control element, for even though arms control-related issues have regularly come up in Iran's bilateral dealings with other countries, such interchanges have mostly amounted to mere repetitions of national stances already presented in multilateral fora. The same has applied for arms control deliberations that have taken place within multilateral institutions that are not part of the United Nations' arms control machinery, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) or the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). While the communiqués of the meetings of NAM and OIC routinely comment on arms control-related issues, the agendas of those gatherings usually cover a wide range of topics, whereby arms control seldom receives other than superficial attention.[28]

Since diplomacy has been the primary instrument through which Islamic Iran has sought to realize its arms control objectives, the country's foreign ministry has been the state institution mainly responsible for the presentation and execution of Iran's arms control policy. Accordingly, the primary sources this study draws on consist almost exclusively of materials that have been produced by the Iranian foreign ministry. Yet the dominance of foreign ministry-generated sources does not mean, in itself, that an analysis based on them would result in a deficient or one-sided account of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy.

As will be discussed in chapter 2, the main task of the Iranian foreign ministry in the realm of arms control has been to implement decisions that have been made by the country's highest decision-makers. Although differences of view have existed between those responsible for devising the Iranian approach to arms control, the operations executed by the foreign ministry have been representative of the Islamic Republic's declared, official line. To the extent that relevant players within Iran's corridors of power, such as military authorities, have publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with the steps taken by the foreign ministry – that is, the line of action sanctioned by the

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[28] Outside diplomatic channels, Iranian representatives have taken part in arms control debates that have occurred in academic and non-governmental circles. Their participation in the meetings of the international Pugwash movement has been illustrative of such extra-diplomatic activity. From an analytical viewpoint, however, Iranian participation in academic and non-governmental arms control debates has been of secondary importance, for extra-diplomatic arms control fora have been viewed by the Iranians primarily as channels to further state objectives. Therefore, these extra-diplomatic aspects of Iran's arms control policy have been left out of the scope of the present study.

Islamic Republic's top leadership – this study has tried to take such dissenting voices into account.

Of course, information about the exchanges of views between the Islamic Republic's arms control decision-makers is scarce and for the most part beyond the reach of scholars. Even though ever since 1997, when Muhammad Khatami started his eight-year term as Iran's president, arms control has increasingly become a topic of public debate within the country, security-related matters, including the details of arms control decision-making, continue to remain highly sensitive issues in the Islamic Republic. Secrecy on security matters is pervasive, and even when they are dealt with in public, the debates stay within certain red lines, the crossing of which is not tolerated by state authorities.

In the light of these circumstances, the primary sources used in this work arguably provide the only avenue currently available for comprehensive analysis of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy.[29] While interviews with Iranian authorities could offer a way to circumvent the unavailability of indigenous documentary evidence, they are not without their problems. As far as this research is concerned, three particular problems need to be mentioned. First – and aside from the fact that, more often than not, key Iranian officials are not accessible to scholars –, the officials may not be willing to discuss certain issues or events. Secondly, even when they are ready to speak, they may not be fully knowledgeable of those issues or events in the first place.

The third problem, that of deception, concerns not only interviews but documentary and other sources as well. In other words, there is always the possibility that what the Iranians say actually aims at hiding their genuine intentions. This problem is widely recognized by Iran scholars. Speaking of methodological problems pertaining to interviews, Byman et al. (2001: 4), for example, note that many of the individuals they interviewed for their study on Iran's security policy "almost certainly pushed their own agendas and biases."

To tackle the possibility of discrepancy between stated and actual policies, this study has sought to weigh Iran's arms control rhetoric against its general foreign and security policy behaviour under the Islamic Republic.[30] No serious account of Iran's arms

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[29] Though it is acknowledged here that subsequent scholarship with an access to indigenous documentary sources could challenge many of the conclusions drawn in the present work, such research could not legitimately disregard the extensive body of archival material relied on in this study.

[30] By doing so, the study has effectively drawn conclusions about the Islamic Republic's policies on the basis of its past behaviour.

control policy could ignore, for example, the Islamic Republic's armament activities, the quantitative and qualitative features of its weapons arsenal.[31] One purpose of the secondary sources used in this work has precisely been to contribute to the task of distinguishing between what really has happened and what Iranian officials claim to have happened.

The division between stated and actual policy – in Goldmann's (1988: 9) terminology, verbalized and non-verbalized policy[32] – serves as an analytical guideline not only for the description of Iran's arms control operations but also for the discussion of their objectives.[33] In seeking to identify the Iranian objectives, the present study will rely, on the one hand, on Iranian officials' own depictions of them. On the other hand, it will look at IR literature and Iran scholarship in order to see which theoretically assumed and empirically uncovered foreign policy objectives are relevant in the analysis of Islamic Iran's arms control behaviour.[34] Thus, as it will transpire, in chapter 2, the examination of the Iranian objectives will be detached from a narrow security perspective and incorporated into a broader discussion of foreign policy objectives. The aim is to identify what kind of foreign policy objectives Islamic Iran has tried to achieve through arms control and which fundamental or timeless goals of foreign policy those objectives have been reflective of.

The purpose of the discussion on Iran's arms control objectives is not to offer a detailed account of the motivations that have supposedly steered Islamic Iran's

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[31] Of course, it is far from easy to make unproblematic conclusions about Iran's arms capabilities and especially about its activities in the area of WMD. Although quite a lot has been written about Islamic Iran's military capabilities, the reliability of the information presented in the literature is in many respects questionable. The reports of governmental intelligence agencies, which most scholarly accounts heavily draw on, may be coloured by political considerations, in addition to which intelligence agencies are careful not to reveal the sources of their information, a problem that makes it very difficult for scholars to assess the accuracy of the intelligence data. As far as the information provided by Iranian exiles opposing the leadership in Tehran is concerned, it has to treated carefully because of the obvious risk that such data is manipulated for political reasons. From all of this follows, as pointed out by Jones (1998: 39), that any discussion of Iran's arms control and security policies must be speculative in some degree.

[32] According to Goldmann (1988: 9–10), verbalized policy is a "line of action that an agent declares he is following or intends to follow with regard to an object." The term 'non-verbalized policy,' in turn, refers to a "line of action that is in fact followed by an agent with regard to an object." Goldmann points out that verbalized policy is specified by the agent, whereas non-verbalized policy is identified and presented by the observer.

[33] The question of declaratory versus actual objectives notwithstanding, there are a number of other problems that make the identification of arms control objectives difficult. These include the possibility that governments define their objectives vaguely in order to gain broad domestic support for their aspirations. Such vague definitions may also stem from the intention to secure a sufficient room of manoeuvre internationally with regard to a particular arms control issue or process. Finally, governments themselves may sometimes be uncertain about what their objectives actually are. (Hill 2003: 120 and Raymond 1987: 99–100)

behaviour at the various phases of its arms control policy during the 25-year period covered by this study. Rather, and in contrary to analyses often found in arms control-related research literature that focus on single diplomatic events – such as treaty negotiations or arms control instruments' review conferences – and seek to elaborate on the factors behind national negotiation tactics,[35] this work aims at providing a broad sketch of the foreign policy objectives that have guided Iran's operations in the area of arms control between 1979–2003. In doing so, the present work focuses on factors that are specific to the case of Iran and does not seek to test any theories of foreign policy.

As for the question of change in Islamic Iran's arms control operations, it is common for Iran scholars to divide the history of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy into distinct periods. These periodizations, discussed in chapter 2, suggest that Iran's foreign policy has undergone clearly identifiable changes during the 25-year period considered in the present work. However, if Iran's foreign policy is viewed as a whole consisting of diplomatic activities in discernible issue areas or sectors, as it will be subsequently done, it is not evident whether the changes that have characterized the Islamic Republic's foreign policy in general have evenly affected all these policy sectors, including that of arms control. In other words, it could be that Iran's arms control efforts have remained immune to the factors that have driven the broad contours of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy.

Therefore, by discussing the historical evolution of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy and by adopting a narrative approach,[36] this study will tentatively deal with the issue of continuity and change in Iran's arms control policy and also tries to preliminarily assess to what extent Iran's arms control operations have been affected by the changes that have taken place in the Islamic Republic's general foreign policy orientation. Such assessment may produce three basic answers. First of all, it may be concluded that the changes in the foreign policy orientation are directly recognizable from Iranian arms control actions. Secondly, it may be observed that Iran's arms control policy has experienced identifiable changes but that the changes do not corresponded with those of the general foreign policy orientation. In that case, as well as in the

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[34] A review of relevant IR literature and Iran scholarship will also act as a way of reducing the impact of the potential problem of deception.

[35] These tactical objectives often serve the purpose of diplomatic bargaining and do not necessarily tell us much about the actual motivations that guide a state's arms control operations in a given thematic area.

[36] Following the definition adopted by Levy (2001: 71), the concept of narrative can be defined as the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order, and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with subplots.

tentative theme-specific assessment of change in the Islamic Republic's arms control operations, the analytical goal would be to identify the timing, the substance, the character or degree, and the sources of the changes peculiar to Iranian arms control policy.

Thirdly, it is possible that the Islamic Republic's arms control policy is characterized above all by continuity. If this is the case, the identification of the patterns of continuity in Iran's arms control policy would be the logical research objective, and so would the identification of the factors that have inhibited change in this area of Iranian state activity.[37] Of course, if pursued in new circumstances, an unchanged line of action itself may be a sign of policy change. This has been taken into account in the definition of policy change adopted here and put forth by Goldmann (1988: 10), according to whom change refers "either to a new act in a given type of situation or a given act in a type of situation previously associated with a different act."

Accordingly, this study resorts to the comparative method only in the sense that it makes within-case comparisons in order to identify the aspects of continuity and change in Islamic Iran's arms control policy. It does not seek to compare the Islamic Republic's arms control policy with that of the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime, and neither does it try to assess in what respects Islamic Iran's arms control operations have resembled those of other actors, such as NAM and OIC countries.[38]

Furthermore, the present work does not seek to place the analysis of Iran's arms control policy into the context of topical – political and scholarly – debates on how outside actors should deal with the Islamic Republic's arms control behaviour and particularly with its nuclear diplomacy.[39] Similarly, it refrains from linking its results with discussions on the prospects of arms control arrangements in the Middle East[40] or on the security architecture of the Persian Gulf region.[41] Finally, the present study does

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[37] It should be noted, however, that the present work's discussion of the factors that have either inhibited or caused changes in Islamic Iran's arms control policy is only tentative. Detailed examination of the question of continuity and change in Iran's arms control diplomacy and other sectors of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy is beyond the scope of this study.

[38] Naturally, a comparative research approach would enrich and deepen the descriptive elements of the current study. For a discussion of the benefits of a comparative research approach in foreign policy analysis, see Webber (2002: 332).

[39] For recent scholarly discussions of the options the international community has to influence Iran's nuclear diplomacy, see, for example, Inbar (2006); *Iran: Where Next on the Nuclear Standoff?* (2004) and the relevant essays in the report edited by Sokolski and Clawson (2004).

[40] See, for example, Kemp (1991) and the relevant essays in the volumes edited by Couloumbis and Dokos (1995) and Eisendorf (1995).

[41] For recent treatments of the subject of Gulf security architecture, see, for example, Russell (2005a); Pollack (2003) and Rathmell et al. (2003).

not try to determine to what extent the Islamic Republic has been able to realize its arms control objectives or whether its arms control diplomacy has been a success or failure for Iran's foreign and security policies.[42]

At the same time, however, the results of this work contribute to efforts directed towards finding answers to all of these questions. First of all, the references made in the subsequent empirical chapters to the Pahlavi regime's arms control activities – mainly intended to serve narrative purposes – preliminarily suggest that there are many common elements between monarchical and Islamic Iran's arms control policies.[43] Subsequent chapters also illustrate that Islamic Iran shares many arms control positions with other NAM and OIC countries, although it is ultimately difficult to determine to what extent the authorities of the Islamic Republic have used outside actors' arms control argumentation and policies as a model for their own diplomatic operations. It is probably not far from the truth to claim that outside influence on Iran was greatest at the time when the Islamic Republic started, following the revolution, to create a foreign policy identity for itself. Be that as it may, Iran, like most other countries, is in any case always heavily influenced by the international arms control debate whose parameters are usually defined by the powerful members of the international community.

Finally, the present work's description of the various aspects of Islamic Iran's security thinking and of the ways in which Iranian officials view international relations provides ample analytical substance for those occupied with the question of how to influence Iranian arms control behaviour,[44] with issues related to Middle East security, or with the evaluation of the successes and failures of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies.

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[42] When evaluating foreign policy performance, scholars have normally used the criterion of effectiveness as the basis for their analyses. In other words, they have tried to see how effective states have been in attaining their declared foreign policy objectives. However, other criteria have been used as well. They include the efficiency (the ratio of benefits to costs) and the equity (the distribution of benefits and costs in proportion to need) of a particular foreign policy. (Raymond 1987: 98, 107 and Haney 1995: 108)

[43] In this sense, one could tentatively concur with Hunter (1990: 2) who concludes that there is a significant degree of continuity in the underlying patterns of Iran's pre- and post-revolutionary foreign policy.

[44] For a discussion of how scholarly analysis can provide important insights into practical diplomacy and statecraft, see George (1993) and the anthology edited by Nincic and Lepgold (2000). The essay by Jentleson (2000: 142–144) discusses how scholarly knowledge was utilized in the context of the Middle East Multilateral Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) negotiations that started in early 1992 and broke down three years later in 1995.

1.5 The Plan of the Study

The pages that follow consist of six chapters. Chapter 2 forms the analytical framework for this study. It starts by discussing and defining the concept of arms control and by placing the phenomenon of arms control in the context of states' national security policy. Then, the chapter moves to examine the role of arms control in the Islamic Republic's security policy by identifying and discussing the institutional diplomatic actors in Iran's arms control policy and by examining the state of arms control in the regional Middle Eastern context, the most important arena of operation for Iran's foreign and security policies.

After concluding that arms control has played only a marginal role in the relations between the governments of the Middle East, chapter 2 introduces the international arms control fora on which the Islamic Republic's arms control operations have taken place and which have enabled Middle Eastern states to pursue objectives that have pertained both to the regional and the international system. Next, the study proceeds to define arms control as a component of foreign policy and to discuss the foreign policy objectives states have traditionally sought to achieve by means of arms control. Moreover, chapter 2 seeks to present the central characteristics of arms control decision-making in Iran and to identify the individuals and institutional actors that have played a key role in the country's arms control decision-making during the time period covered by this study. Finally, chapter 2 discusses the so-called three-era thesis which divides Iran's foreign policy of 1979–2003 into three distinct phases and lays the foundation for the subsequent analysis of continuity and change in the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy.

Chapter 3, the first empirical chapter of this work, focuses on Iran's arms control operations in the area of conventional weapons. It starts with a discussion of Iran's foreign, military, armament, and arms control policies under Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. The purpose of the discussion of the Shah period is to present the broad contours of the diplomatic and military legacy inherited by the leaders of post-Pahlavi Iran as well as to demonstrate how the rejection of the Shah's policies formed a starting point for post-revolutionary Iran's arms control argumentation.

Chapter 3 proceeds by examining post-Pahlavi Iran's initial approach to arms control in general and conventional arms control in particular.[45] The examination is followed by a discussion of Islamic Iran's conventional arms control operations during the 1980–1988 war against Iraq. After that, the chapter focuses on Iran's post-war rearmament program which was necessitated by the equipment losses experienced during the eight-year conflict and which constitutes an important balancing factor for the analysis of Iran's conventional arms control operations.

The examination of Iran's post-war activities in the area of conventional arms control begins with a discussion of the Iranian operations in the time period between the end of the Iran–Iraq war and the start of the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991. The discussion is divided into two sections. The first one deals with the Islamic Republic's actions that pertain to issues and developments in Iran's regional environment. The second section concentrates on Iranian diplomatic argumentation on the state of conventional arms control at the global level. The Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations in the context of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict are discussed separately.

The analysis of the Iranian operations in the post-Gulf conflict period, under the presidencies of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami, too, draws a distinction between the regional and global aspects of the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy. The final section of chapter 3, in turn, centers around Iran's approach to the question of micro-disarmament. The first part of the section analyzes Iran's actions with regard to the issue of anti-personnel mines (APM), whereas the second one looks at Iranian operations in the area of small arms control.

In chapter 4, the focus of the study moves to the realm of WMD, that is, to the analysis of the Islamic Republic's chemical and biological arms control operations.[46] As far as the treatment of the issue of chemical arms control is concerned, it starts with a brief discussion of Iran's chemical diplomacy in the months after the 1979 revolution

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[45] In fact, while dealing with the specific issue of conventional arms control, chapter 3 also constitutes a frame story for the narratives that follow in chapters 4 and 5. Not only does it elaborate on the Islamic Republic's general approach to arms control, but it also discusses the developments in Iran's external environment to which Iranian authorities responded by means of arms control.

[46] In terms of the lethality of various weapons categories, then, this work moves from the least dangerous to the most destructive class of weaponry. Wirtz (2000: 3) characterizes the differences between the three caterogies of weapons of mass destruction as follows: "In general, chemical weapons are the easiest to make but are unlikely to produce the cataclysmic devels of destruction that could result from the use of biological or nuclear weapons. By contrast, nuclear weapons are most difficult to produce but also the most destructive both in lethality and in the speed by which death and destruction could occur. Biological weapons share the most frightening aspects of each of the other two: biological weapons can be made almost as easily as chemical weapons, yet their destructive potential could approach that of nuclear weapons."

and then proceeds to examine the years of the Iran–Iraq war, the period which had a dramatic impact not only on post-revolutionary Iran's chemical arms control operations but also on its arms control policy as a whole.[47]

The examination of Iran's post-war chemical arms control operations is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the Islamic Republic's chemical diplomacy between the end of the Iran–Iraq war and the finalization of the treaty text of the CWC which was opened for signature in January 1993. The discussion in the first part, as well as in the subsequent sections of chapter 4, is guided by an in-built thematic separation between the regional and global aspects of the Iranian diplomacy. The second part, in turn, discusses Iran's chemical arms control operations between the period after the Islamic Republic's signing of the CWC in January 1993 and its ratification of the treaty in July 1997. The third and final part dealing with Iran's post-war chemical arms control operations concentrates on Iran's policies following the Islamic Republic's CWC ratification.

As for the analysis of Islamic Iran's biological arms control operations, the discussion begins with a brief survey of Iran's biological arms control diplomacy under the Shah's regime which signed the BTWC, the key international instrument in the area of biological arms control, in April 1972 and ratified the treaty in August 1973. Next, the study examines post-revolutionary Iran's biological arms control operations prior to the Iran–Iraq war, after which the focus shifts to the Iranian operations in the course of the 1980–1988 conflict.

The discussion of post-war Iran's biological arms control policy is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the Iranian actions in the period from the end of the war until the establishment, in September 1994, of the BTWC Ad Hoc Group (AHG) whose task and mandate was to consider appropriate measures and draft proposals for the strengthening of the biological treaty. The creation of the AHG was a reflection of the renewed international interest in biological arms control in the aftermath of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict. On the other hand, during the period under consideration, the Islamic Republic's biological arms control diplomacy developed a distinct identity and transformed into an important element of Iran's arms control policy.

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[47] Maloney (2002: 109) describes the role of the war experience for Iran as follows: "Much as American identity and foreign policy were haunted by the ghosts of Vietnam for two decades, the war with Iraq will continue to inform the strategic outlook of the Islamic Republic for years – a fact that is vastly underappreciated by the rest of the world."

The second section dealing with Islamic Iran's post-war biological arms control operations looks at the Iranian activities during the AHG negotiations which started in January 1995 and stopped in July 2001, as the United States officially dissociated itself from the talks and thereby brought the AHG process to a halt. In the final section of chapter 4, the focus is on Iran's biological diplomacy in the aftermath of the AHG's demise. The cut-off event for the examination of the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations is the resumed session of the fifth review conference of the BTWC which was held in Geneva in November 2002.

Post-revolutionary Iran's activities in the area of nuclear arms control is the subject of chapter 5. The analysis of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations begins with a survey of the Shah government's ambitious nuclear power program which drew heavy criticism from the leaders of post-Pahlavi Iran and was halted by the Iranian government following the 1979 revolution. The chapter continues by discussing the Islamic Republic's eventual decision to restart the Iranian nuclear program and by presenting post-Pahlavi Iran's initial diplomatic positions on nuclear arms control both in the global and the regional context. The final section dealing with the Iranian operations during the Islamic Republic's first decade, in turn, concentrates on Iranian diplomacy with regard to nuclear issues that were directly related to the Iran–Iraq war.

The analysis of the Islamic Republic's post-war nuclear arms control operations starts with a discussion of Iranian diplomatic argumentation on three specific topics: complete and universal nuclear disarmament, the question of security assurances, and the control of fissile materials. Then, chapter 5 concentrates on Iran's diplomacy with regard to the issue of nuclear testing and especially in the formal multilateral negotiations on the creation of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) which started in early 1994 and were concluded in the summer of 1996. The discussion of the CTBT negotiations is followed by an examination of Iranian views on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, on the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and on regional nuclear arms control.

The third part of chapter 5 begins by looking at the Khatami administration's views on nuclear arms control and at the Islamic Republic's response to the May 1998 nuclear test crisis in South Asia, and then moves to the examination of the Islamic Republic's activities in the area of ballistic missile control. Next, the discussion focuses on the question of Iran's nuclear program which turned into a major international issue after

the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States[48] and especially after the revelation, made in August 2002, that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program was much more advanced than previously believed. The coverage of the diplomatic crisis that ensued – and still continues – between the Islamic Republic and the international community over the Iranian nuclear program consists of the years 2002 and 2003.

During this initial stage of the crisis, the officials of the Islamic Republic, in their effort to protect their country's ability to pursue a comprehensive nuclear program, resorted to a diplomatic course that was characterized by a mix of defiance of and acquiescence to the demands of the major powers and the IAEA – a behavioral pattern that came to typify Iranian diplomacy in the later stages of the crisis as well. Iran's signing of the IAEA additional protocol on 18 December 2003 acts as the cut-off date for the examination of the diplomatic arm-wrestling between the Islamic Republic and the international community over Iranian nuclear activities. The remaining discussion in chapter 5 consists of the examination of Iran's general diplomatic defence of its nuclear program, of Iranian responses to what the leaders of the Islamic Republic viewed as the diplomatic and military threat posed by the U.S. government of president George W. Bush, and of Iran's diplomacy with regard to the issues of WMD terrorism and regional nuclear arms control.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter of this work, summarizes the findings of the previous empirical chapters and incorporates the analysis of the objectives of Iran's arms control operations in the four distinct areas of arms control into the discussion. The examination of the Iranian objectives includes an identification of the fundamental foreign policy goals that have steered the Islamic Republic's arms control objective-setting. It also discusses the question of Iran's WMD activities in the chemical, biological, and nuclear fields. Finally, chapter 6 tentatively assesses to what extent post-revolutionary Iran's arms control operations have been characterized by stability and change.

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[48] In fact, while focusing on the topic of nuclear arms control, chapter 5 also acts as a frame story for the sections of the study that deal with issues and developments pertaining to the post-September 11 period. Thus, for example, the issues of chemical and biological terrorism are discussed in connection with that chapter.

2 ISLAMIC IRAN AND ARMS CONTROL: THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Problem of War

In his classic discussion of the phenomenon of war, Rapoport (1968: 11–17) discerns three philosophies of war. The first of them, the political philosophy of war, pictures war as a rational tool of national policy. The second, the escatological philosophy of war, is founded on the idea that history will bring about a ”final war” leading to the unfolding of some kind of a divine, natural, or human ”grand design.” Finally, to the adherents of what Rapoport calls the cataclysmic philosophy of war, war amounts to an irrational activity, a catastrophe that befalls humanity.

The historical record and contemporary manifestations of warfare illustrate that the conception of war as a purposeful and beneficial phenomenon strongly influences human behaviour.[1] In many regions of the world, war, generally defined as large-scale organized violence between political units (Levy 1998: 141), continues to be part of everyday human life. At the same time, however, history and the present time also demonstrate that the political and escatological philosophies of war have always had their opponents. Many of them have equated war with a disease, a deviant form of human behaviour, and believed that the disease can be cured through human intervention.

Naturally, any effort aimed at preventing the occurance of war has to be based on an idea of the factors that cause wars. Scientific study of war has always been a multidisciplinary enterprise – currently involving scholars from disciplines such as biology, psychology, anthropology, history, and political science – and strongly driven by the practical desire of preventing war.[2] Given that the question of war has drawn scholars from many different disciplines, it is not surprising that answers to the question of what causes war have varied greatly. The highly heterogenous body of knowledge on the causes of war has not only been a result of the complex nature of the subject matter itself, but also reflected the differences in war scholars' disciplinary emphases.

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[1] Holsti's (1991) study of 177 international wars between 1648–1989 and the issues that motivated combatants to resort to the use of armed force in those cases testifies, for its part, to the vitality of the political philosophy of war among state and non-state actors.

[2] Levy (2002: 350) dates the start of scientific study of war to Thucydides' historical treatise on the Peloponnesian War over 2,400 years ago. That the academic discipline of IR was established, at the beginning of the 20th century, to address the problem of war, shows how scholarship on war has been intimately linked with the goal of finding a solution to the problem of war.

Whereas natural scientists, for example, have been interested in the relationship between human nature and war,[3] IR scholarship on war has increasingly moved towards focusing on the factors that explain variations in war and peace, that is, on the factors that explain, as Levy (1989: 212) puts it, "why war occurs at some times under certain conditions, rather than at other times under other conditions, or between some states rather than other states." Historians, on the other hand, have by and large rejected the mainstream IR scholars' effort to generalize about variations in war and peace by arguing that wars, like other social phenomena, are unique events and, therefore, the causes of war are as numerous as the number of wars (ibid. and Garnett 2002: 70).[4]

The mixed record of war scholars' work has meant that, on the one hand, they have succeeded in making major strides in the description of the incidence, location, and costs of war. Yet, on the other hand, the age-old explanatory puzzle of what causes war has remained unanswered. The range of explanations among scholars is huge,[5] in addition to which some factors are viewed, contradictorily, either as a cause of war or as a condition of peace. Within IR, the literature on the causes of war has often been categorized according to the so-called levels-of-analysis framework. Broadly speaking, this approach traces the sources of war either to the structure of the international system within which all states exist, to conditions that are internal to states, or to the beliefs and choices of individuals.[6] (Levy 1989: 221–222 and 1998: 142–144 and Holsti 1991: 1–5)

Nikitin's (2000) typology of the causes of war acts as another example of the way in which the sources of war have been identified and categorized by IR scholars. In his model, Nikitin draws a distinction between human nature, social nature, and technical or man-made nature, and argues that scholars have traditionally traced individual causes of wars to one of these explanatory categories. From the perspective of the present work, Nikitin's category of man-made nature is of particular interest, for it includes and refers to armaments as an independent factor that causes wars. It is this belief that military

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[3] For a discussion of this research orientation, see Brown (1987: 7–21) and Garnett (2002: 75–82).

[4] Students of war can, thus, be divided into three broad groups: those who concentrate on the factors without which war could not occur at all, those who focus on the factors that account for variations in war and peace, and those interested in the causes of particular wars.

[5] Holsti (1991: 5) comments the situation by lamenting that the range of explanatory variables runs from "the genetic to the cosmic."

[6] For a detailed discussion of systemic-level, societal-level, and individual-level theories of the causes of war in IR, see Levy (1989: 223–289 and 1998: 145–159). Within historiography, it is common to divide the origins or causes of war into what are generally referred to as underlying and immediate causes of war. The former establish the context for individual wars, whereas the latter trigger them. (Levy 1989: 221 and Garnett 2002: 70–71)

means constitute a problem in themselves, a problem that has its own dynamic, that underlies the enterprise and realm of state behaviour known as arms control.

The scholars and policy-makers who have treated armaments as an independent source of war have basically viewed weapons either as a constant, a thing without which wars would not occur in the first place, or as a factor that explains variations in war and peace. The representatives of the latter line of thought have based their argumentation, above all, on the claim that arms races, rapid increases or improvements in the military arsenals of states that find themselves in adversary relationships, make the occurance of war more likely.[7]

Closely related to the argument that fierce competition between adversaries over the quantity and quality of their military means constitutes an autonomous process that intensifies mutual fears and normally ends in war is the view that certain configurations of military balance between adversaries are more war-prone than others. For example, a large imbalance of military power between antagonistic states that favours a state dissatisfied with the prevailing relationship may result in a war initiated by the dissatisfied party. Furthermore, if an equalized military balance is about to be altered by one party, the other might launch a preventive attack to neutralize the challenge to the existing constellation. An equalized military balance affected by certain kinds of military deployments is yet another situation where armaments can increase the likelihood of war. Deployments that are carried out in a war-threat situation and serve as easy targets to another party's military strikes may tempt that party to launch an attack first. (Brown 1987: 102–107)

The assumption of the causal relationship between armaments and war notwithstanding, many scholars and policy-makers have focused on the nexus between weapons and war also because of the belief that increases in global arms transfers and the proliferation of certain types of weaponry add to the severity and magnitude of wars. Understandably, ever since the end of the Second World War, the fear of the destructive force of armaments has primarily been linked to nuclear weapons and, to a lesser degree, to other WMD.[8] The more these weapons proliferate, the argument has been, the

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[7] For a discussion of the concept and phenomenon of arms racing, see Buzan and Herring (1998: 75–82).

[8] As for the question of how the advent of the nuclear era has influenced scholarly debate on the causes of war, most scholars have not tried to include the aspect of nuclear weapons in their deliberations. While some have claimed that, irrespective of the nuclear factor, the causes of war have fundamentally remained the same, those stressing the radical impact of the nuclear revolution have went as far as claiming that scholarly conclusions drawn based on the events of the pre-nuclear era are no longer much of analytical use. The claim that the existence of nuclear weapons has reduced the likelihood of war between nuclear

greater the risk that they will be used either by accident or design. The strong advances made in the area of military technology have also brought the relationship between conventional weapons and the scale of violence increasingly to the fore. (Brown 1987: 89; Craft 1999: 1–3 and Buzan and Herring 1998: 201–204)

Yet, the view that emphasizes the dangers posed by armaments is by no means universally accepted. Quite to the contrary, there are many who argue that the accumulation of weaponry is a symptom rather than a cause of war. In other words, war and insecurity is driven by political conflicts and not by armaments. The representatives of this school of thought underscore the security benefits of weapons by maintaining that intensive arming may sometimes be the only way for states to deter their adversaries from launching an attack against them – and, hence, to avoid war. And sometimes, those stressing the importance of armaments further point out, military force may have to be used in order to alter existing conditions that maintain insecurity. Moreover, some have claimed that arms transfers may also decrease the severity and magnitude of wars by enabling the recipients to gain an upper hand in the hostilities and bring them to a quick end. In all these cases, then, weapons are considered critical guarantees of peace. (Craft 1999: 3, 7, 17; Buzan and Herring 1998: 76 –77 and Glynn 1993: 325–326)

Since no consensus exists on whether armaments basically create or solve security problems, it logically follows that there is no agreement on the prescriptive issue of whether war can be prevented through measures focusing on military instruments, either. Those viewing politics as the ultimate driving force of insecurity point out that if armaments are not a cause of war, then the problem of war cannot be ameliorated through arms control. The primacy of politics also means that the idea of meaningful arms control between adversaries is inevitably flawed. Gray (1993: 334–336 and 1999: 194) makes this point by referring to what he calls the arms control paradox: the suspicion and antagonism that renders arms control relevant in the first place is precisely the reason for why arms control cannot work.

The critics of arms control claim that the history of arms control validates their argumentation. In their view, arms control efforts have failed to deliver on what they have promised: they have not succeeded in preventing wars and neither have they been capable of improving political relations between adversaries. As a consequence, the

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and especially major nuclear powers is perhaps the most widely accepted finding that links nuclear weapons to the debate on the causes of war. (Levy 1989: 217–219, 289–291)

critics maintain, arms control has mainly acted as a tool of state propaganda aiming to please domestic audiences and manipulate foreign adversaries. In this sense, international arms control negotiations have been seen as processes that may actually incite tensions between antagonists instead of reducing them. Most dangerously, the critics of arms control argue, arms control may jeopardize national security by lulling states into a false sense of security and bringing them to ignore the proper management of the balance of power between them and their adversaries.[9] (Buzan and Herring 1998: 227, 246; Baylis 2002: 198–199 and Gray 1993: 344–345)

Whatever the accuracy of the propositions put forward by those who dismiss arms control as a useful and prudent tool of national security, however, the fact remains that, throughout history, arms control has been part of states' diplomatic and military relations. The practice of arms control is several thousands of years old and has regulated the military behaviour of states and their pre-modern equivalents across different cultures.[10] Although arms control arrangements have historically responded to particular needs and circumstances, they have always rested on the assumption that cooperation in the regulation of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of military power contributes either to the avoidance of war, the management of crises, or the limitation of the damages caused by on-going wars. (Croft 1996: 13, 20–21)

2.2 A Broad Understanding of Arms Control

The end of the First World War is often mentioned as the starting point for the modern practice of arms control. The experience of a disastrous global war, together with the wide-spread concern over the ever-increasing destructiveness of weapons technology, raised the popularity of the cataclysmic philosophy of war and the role of arms control in international politics. While subsequently subject to the ebb and flow of political tides, arms control managed, during the 20th century, to consolidate its position as an institutionalized area of diplomacy and as a thematically distinct topic on the agendas of international organizations. Also, during the 20th century, the body of thought stressing the causal connections between weapons and war became more varied.

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[9] The critics of arms control also frequently point out that authoritarian regimes often cheat on the agreements they adhere to. Therefore, the critics argue, arms control agreements put democracies into a disadvantegous position vis-à-vis the authoritarian parties. (Baylis 2002: 188; Gray 1993: 344–345 and Croft 1996: 1)

The emergence of a clear distinction between the concepts of disarmament and arms control was one of the results of this development.

2.2.1 The notion of disarmament

The idea of disarmament as an approach to tackling the problem of war is based on the notion that, without military arsenals, states would not be able to use violence as an instrument of national policy in international relations. If states recognized that the existence of armaments and the use of military force entailed unacceptable risks and costs and gave up their military means, the advocates of disarmament argue, states would manage to purge inter-state war from the world and pave the way for a peaceful international system.[11]

The implementation in practice of this simple proposition, however, is confronted by the fundamental problem of how to create such a degree of trust and harmony of interests between states that they are prepared to give up arms and further their security and political objectives exclusively by non-military means. The proponents of disarmament have identified four main routes through which such a change could be brought about. The first route is to simply abandon armaments without any preconditions. This approach does not envision any need for a period of transition during which states would harmonize their views and then move towards disarmament. A decision to disarm in a single stroke would be the preferable solution. (Buzan and Herring 1998: 255–256 and Baylis 2002: 186)

In contrast, the other three disarmament approaches do not believe in the feasibility of an abrupt change. They acknowledge that the ultimate goal of disarmament cannot be achieved without prior transformations in the international system. One strand of this thought speaks of the need for an international political reform realized through the removal of fear and suspicion from international relations or through the creation of a supra-national authority, a world government. Another strand of thought rejects the idea of a world government as unrealistic or undesirable but simultaneously sees the state as the ultimate obstacle to disarmament. For the supporters of this approach, a world

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[10] For the history of arms control, see the relevant articles in Volume II of the three-volume anthology edited by Burns (1993a); Goldblat (1994) and Croft (1996).

[11] The term 'disarmament' has thus three conceptual dimensions. First, it can refer to a school of thought that claims to offer a distinctive solution to the problem of war. Secondly, it can refer to the process by

without armaments results from transnational non-state cooperation and from steps taken within states at the level of local politics. The final strand of thought talking about a phased transition towards disarmament sidelines the questions over the roles of world government or the state and views the power of the people and the adoption of non-violent forms of political activism as factors that are capable of rendering weapons irrelevant. (Buzan and Herring 1998: 256–261; Brown 1987: 138 and Baylis 2002: 186)

These orientations testify to the fact that the idea of disarmament has historically been closely associated with various peace ideologies and schemes and with what is broadly defined as the idealist or liberal school of thought in IR. Believing that the problem of war can be eradicated through collective action, liberal thinkers have considered disarmament an essential component of their peace efforts. Indeed, diplomatic enthusiasm for disarmament increased dramatically during the final stages of and after the First World War, at a time when liberal thought had a strong influence on statesmen and policy-makers. The U.S. president Woodrow Wilson's call, in his so-called fourteen points speech of January 1918, for the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety, and the subsequent disarmament efforts by the League of Nations, the international organization established in 1919, were among the clearest indications of the prevailing opinion that was favourable to the idea of disarmament (Corradini 1993: 1041–1042).

The ultimate failure of the post-World War I disarmament efforts and the experience of the Second World War eventually led to a general disillusionment with disarmament both in theoretical and practical terms. Although, after the war, governments continued to pay lip service to the idea of general and complete disarmament, their actions suggested that they viewed it more or less as a utopian objective. As a consequence, ever since the end of the Second World War, the concept of disarmament has been used, above all, to refer to partial reduction of military means. During the Cold War years, international disarmament efforts focused mainly on WMD, whereas in the post-Cold War period disarmament has increasingly been seen also as an avenue to tackle the problem of military violence in regional and intra-state contexts.[12]

Despite the setbacks it has experienced since the end of the Second World War, however, the idea of general and complete disarmament continues to have its

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which military capabilities are reduced or, thirdly, to the end-condition of being disarmed (Buzan and Herring 1998: 245).

[12] Among others, disarmament has been an important aspect of international efforts aimed at building peace in countries that have experienced civil wars.

supporters. For many, comprehensive disarmament still offers the best solution to the problem of war. Secondarily, the supporters of general and complete disarmament continue to see it as a means to prevent the militarization of societies and to further the ideal of global justice and equality. Related to this, many advocates of disarmament also argue that reductions in military expenditures brought about by comprehensive disarmament would free human and material resources for meeting urgent non-military needs both nationally and internationally. (Buzan and Herring 1998: 245–246 and Burns 1993b: 7)

2.2.2 The notion of arms control

In the wake of the general decline of disarmament's popularity following the Second World War, another theoretical approach focusing on the relationship between armaments and war started to gain ground both intellectually and politically. The rise and development of this approach, labelled as arms control, was inseparably linked with the advent of nuclear weapons and the theory and practice of nuclear deterrence. Worried about the possibility of a nuclear war, the proponents of arms control sought to ensure that the deterrence relationship between the Cold War superpowers would not be undermined by arms racing and technological innovations. Apart from hoping to ensure that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union would succeed in obtaining a nuclear first-strike capability – that is, an ability to eliminate the other power's nuclear arsenal to the extent that the aggressor would be safe from an unendurable nuclear retaliation – and hence potentially use nuclear weapons for military or political purposes, the so-called arms controllers also wanted to minimize the risk of an accidental nuclear war caused by human or technological error.[13]

Although the term 'arms control' is often associated with the management of the major nuclear powers' military balance and with the arms control theorizing that occurred between the late 1950s and the late 1960s, however, the intellectual premises and the practice of arms control precede the Cold War era. Thus, the basic principles of arms control are not exclusively confined to nuclear or WMD balances but are applicable to non-WMD military relationships as well. Similarly, the practice of arms

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[13] For a discussion of the theory and practice of arms control that defines arms control as an intellectual approach and as state behaviour limited to the Cold War context of superpower nuclear confrontation, see Sheehan (1988).

control is not limited only to states but can be resorted to by non-state actors as well. (Croft 1996: 3–4, 14–15; Buzan and Herring 1998: 212 and Baylis 2002: 186)

Whereas the ultimate objective of the proponents of disarmament is to purge weapons and war from the world, the goal-setting of arms controllers is more modest. The advocates of arms control maintain that because of international anarchy, the absence of a central authority with coercive power in the international system, states will continue to obtain armaments to secure their national security and political interests. For this reason, and because of their skepticism over the prospect of radical international political reform, arms controllers do not believe that armaments can be eliminated from the international system.[14] (Brown 1987: 141; Sheehan 1988: 6 and Baylis 2002: 185)

Nonetheless, they do recognize that military means may act as a cause of war. Yet their analysis of the relationship between arms and war differs significantly from that of disarmament advocates. For arms controllers, the mere existence of weapons does not qualify as a cause of war. Instead, it is the nature of a military balance that potentially determines whether a rivalry between political actors leads to a war, and should war occur, what the consequences of the hostilities turn out to be. The key word in arms controllers' vocabulary is stability. A stable military balance is seen as an essential mechanism of war prevention. Any alteration in a military balance, whether resulting from technological changes or the process of arms racing, arms controllers believe, can transform a political rivalry into armed violence. (Cot and Boniface 1991: 812 and Brown 1987: 173)

From the arms control perspective, then, armaments can serve a dual function: they can act either as a source of security or insecurity. All depends on whether weapons contribute to the maintenance of military balance or whether they alter military balances and consequently add to the temptation of using military force. It follows, from this analysis, that the main practical task arms controllers set for themselves is to contribute to the management of military means and to the maintenance of stable military balances. In executing this task, arms control advocates seek to limit the volume and growth of military arsenals as well as to control the uses to which existing weapons are put,[15] and

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[14] Although these theoretical premises testify to the fact that there is a strong link between the idea of arms control and the school of political realism in IR, it should also be reminded that some of the hardest critics of arms control come from the same realist tradition.

[15] Since arms control usually involves reductions in armaments, arms control measures have sometimes been supported by the advocates of general and complete disarmament. Fundamentally, however, the worldviews of the two approaches are wide apart from each other. Given the arms controllers' skepticism over the possibility of a radical reform of the international system, the advocates of disarmament view

if the sustenance of a stable military balance necessitates it, also call for increases in military capabilities.[16] (Cot and Boniface 1991: 811–812; Buzan and Herring 1998: 212 and Baylis 2002: 184)

Of course, no arms control can take place unless the parties involved believe and recognize that regardless of their politico-military rivalry, they share a common interest in cooperating militarily in order to avoid the possibility of war. In other words, they need to acknowledge that they can pursue their own security interests by relieving their adversaries' fears of being attacked. The pursuit of security through arms control can focus on the strengthening of crisis stability, arms race stability, or both. Measures aimed at enhancing crisis stability seek to reduce incentives for surprise attack and to eliminate problems that pertain to the quantitative or qualitative features of the adversaries' military forces and are capable of triggering war. Efforts towards arms race stability seek to curtail military and technological developments to the point that they do not result in destabilizing counter-responses. (Jervis 1993: 240–241; Schear 1993: 427–428 and Daalder 1992: 52)

2.2.3 Arms control as an instrument of national security policy

Although states continue to regard military force as the ultimate guarantor of their security, they also recognize that arms control and disarmament can serve as additional means to maintain and enhance national security. In other words, the ideas of arms control and disarmament are not seen as alternatives to military strength but as complements to it. Whether a state resorts to arms control or disarmament to further its security objectives naturally depends on how it defines its security needs at any one given time. Therefore, for example, a state may stand out as a strong advocate of arms control and disarmament in a certain period of time while dismissing all regulation efforts in another. Similarly, a state may support arms control or disarmament in one context but act as a fierce opponent of them in another. Whatever approach a state

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arms control, as put by Sheehan (1988: 32), as a "philosophy of despair." Arms controllers, in turn, generally dismiss disarmament as an utopian project and point out that weapons reductions, if undermining military balances, can actually increase the risk of war.

[16] The literature on arms control often draws a distinction between two types of arms control: structural and operational arms control. The concept of structural arms control refers to measures that address the quantity and quality of weapons, whereas operational arms control seeks to contain the behaviour of armed forces by preventing military deployments and actions considered to be provocative or war-prone (Baylis 2002: 185).

adopts in a specific situation, arms control and disarmament always remain as potential tools for the maintenance and enhancement of national security.

For the purposes of this study, arms control is used as a generic term referring to efforts by states and other actors to do away with armaments and to regulate the use and possession of the instruments of war. Hence, the term covers activities that are ideationally based on the school of thought known as arms control and the intellectual tradition of disarmament.[17] Nevertheless, when necessary for analytical or illustrative purposes, the empirical chapters that follow will make a distinction between activities that specifically stem from the notion of arms control and those based on the idea of disarmament.[18] But given the contemporary usage of the concept of disarmament, which mostly refers to partial abolition of weapons and not to general and complete elimination of armaments, currently considered by and large unattainable, it is in this limited sense that the concept of disarmament is primarily discussed in this study.

Furthermore, it is necessary to point out that the generic term arms control, as used in the present work, also encompasses articulations and deeds that pertain to the military concepts of confidence-building measures (CBM) and non-offensive defence (NOD). CBM refer to steps taken by adversaries to exchange information about their military postures without regulating the existing level of armaments. The fundamental purpose of such exchanges is to assure the parties involved that none of them is about to launch a military attack or, in cases where a war has already broken out, to escalate the on-going hostilities to a higher level of conflict. The notion of NOD, in turn, rests on a conceptual distinction between offensive and defensive military strategies, force postures, and political objectives, and on the belief that there is a causal relationship between offensive strategies, postures, and objectives and the occurance of war. For the advocates of NOD, then, the adoption of defensive strategies, postures, and objectives is

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[17] This broad understanding of arms control is congruent with that of Croft (1996: 14) who defines arms control as a "search for collaborative arrangements between political entities that seeks to set restraints on the possession or use of certain forms of arms, whether in complete form or in component parts."

[18] Note, for example, the titles of the subsequent empirical chapters. They will already indicate whether the articulations and deeds made by Iran emphasize the arms control or the disarmament component of the umbrella term arms control. It should be noted that in everyday usage, it is disarmament that is sometimes being used as a generic term that covers the narrow definitions of arms control and disarmament. This is a common practice, for example, within the UN. As far as the terminology employed by the officials of the Islamic Republic is concerned, the Iranians have used arms control and disarmament as generic terms (see, for example, A/C.1/50/PV.28, 1995: 9) as well as referred to them as separate approaches to the problem of war (see, for example, A/52/PV.6, 1997: 24).

the key to war avoidance and national security.[19] (Cot and Boniface 1991: 812; Brown 1987: 193 and Buzan and Herring 1998: 231)

There are five main ways in which states have historically put arms control into diplomatic practice. The first technique, arms control at the conclusion of conflicts, points to instances where states have linked arms control with attempts to end conflicts. The purpose of such arrangements, usually made at the end of wars and other major conflicts, has been to lay foundations for new post-conflict relations between the parties involved. The second technique, arms control to further strategic stability, has been used to stabilize the military relations between two or more states. The focus of such stabilization measures has been either on crisis or arms race stability, or both. (Croft 1996: 40–46)

Diplomatic efforts aimed at creating international norms of behaviour have constituted the third principal arms control approach emerging from the history of inter-state relations. Such efforts have resulted, among others, in agreements that prohibit the use of certain weapons, in rules on the protection of non-combatants during armed conflicts, and in arrangements seeking to prevent the occurance of war in particular geographic areas. Fourthly, governments have used arms control to contain threats that stem from the proliferation of armaments. The purpose of proliferation management has been twofold: to prevent potential enemies from strengthening their military arsenals and to block the spread of armaments that have been viewed as capable of threatening global stability. Finally, governments have integrated arms control into the activities of international organizations. This approach, arms control by international organization, has focused, above all, on the creation of global arms regulation arrangements, on the control of individual states' instruments of war, and on the formulation of security guarantees to elicit arms control agreements.[20] (Ibid.: 47–58)

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[19] The notion of NOD is not dealt with in greater detail in the present work, for it has not been part of the mainstream diplomatic debate on arms control and, as the subsequent chapters will show, certainly not a noteworthy component of the Islamic Republic's arms control argumentation. For detailed discussions of the NOD approach, see Møller (1998: 3–33) and Buzan and Herring (1998: 231–244).

[20] Burns (1993b: 2–5) offers an alternative categorization of the techniques of arms control. He lists the following six general techniques: (a) limitation and reduction of weapons; (b) demilitarization, denuclearization, and neutralization (the first two of these techniques refer to measures that remove or place restrictions on military forces, weapons, and fortifications within a particular area of land, water, or airspace, whereas neutralization is a special international status that guarantees the political independence and territorial integrity of a state, provided that it promises to engage in war only for defensive purposes); (c) regulation or outlawing of specific weapons; (d) control of arms manufacture and traffic; (e) law of war; and (f) stabilization of the international environment (which includes actions to reduce the risk of accidental war and to create confidence between adversaries).

Most definitions of arms control portray it as a collaborative activity involving two or more parties. Indeed, most arms control arrangements have resulted from international talks that have taken place in bilateral or multilateral settings. The diplomatic process of formal arms control is composed of four individual stages: pre-negotiation, negotiation, ratification, and implementation. To be successful, formal arms control must result in promises given by the parties involved that they will abide by the terms of the negotiated arrangement. Also, it has to result in an agreement on how to ensure that the parties will actually keep their promises and on how potential treaty non-compliance will be dealt with. Verification, the mechanism by which the parties satisfy themselves that their treaty partners are respecting their treaty obligations, has traditionally been one of the most contentious issues in the process of formal arms control. The verification clauses of an arms control agreement seek not only to ensure that any variations from agreed arms limitations can be detected, but also to act as a deterrent to treaty violations and to promote public confidence in arms control agreements.[21] (Gallagher 1998: 20; Chalmers 1997: 282 and Sheehan 1988: 123–124)

But arms control agreements may also come into being informally, and they do not necessarily have to be built on the principle of reciprocity. Thus, for example, arms control arrangements may be established through mutual verbal agreements or declarations, and arms control steps can be taken unilaterally. In the case of unilateral arms control, a state – or some other armed actor – imposes, voluntarily and purposefully, restrictions on its own military capabilities. The neglect of the maintenance and management of one's military resources qualifies as another, though a much more hypothetical, type of unilateral arms control. Finally, of course, arms control can be carried out through retributive measures, through the use of military or political power. (Burns 1993b: 6; Rattray 1996: 6–8 and Kartchner 1996: 24)

In order to guarantee the national security of their countries, governments need to simultaneously deal with potential and actual threats that emanate from both within and without their states. Despite the fact that, historically, the focus of arms control, both in

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[21] The actual process of verification is composed of two sets of activities: the collection of data about treaty members' behaviour with regard to the treaty in question and the evaluation of the information gathered. The data collection methods used in arms control arrangements consist of the following: (a) traditional intelligence gathering (which includes diplomatic techniques, media scrunity, and espionage); (b) national technical means (which includes satellites, seismic monitoring stations, and ground-based radars); and (c) on-site inspections (OSI) which can be further sub-divided into remote OSI (which rely, among others, on seismic devices and prepositioned cameras), limited OSI (inspections limited to challenge), interval OSI (regular periodic visitations), residential OSI (permanent observation at certain

terms of theory and practice, has been on inter-state relations and the regulation of states' external security environments, arms control can be used as a tool to maintain and further domestic security as well. In addition to criminal violence, which concerns all states but relatively seldom poses a serious threat to national security, the core values of a state can be undermined by political violence aimed at challenging the existing domestic order. Usually, domestic political violence is carried out by local opposition groups, but can also involve forces of a foreign government or non-governmental political organization. In the worst case, such violence takes the form of full-scale armed conflict between the forces defending and questioning the existing domestic order.

Arms control, as a policy instrument dealing with the domestic security environment, may be used by a government, for example, to influence the course of hostilities against a domestic opponent. Similarly, a government can make use of arms control to reinforce a post-conflict political settlement with an opponent. Such a settlement, and the arms control measures related to it, may be based on an agreement reached by the parties themselves or brokered by foreign actors. Finally, arms control can be resorted to for preventive purposes. By impeding domestic actors' access to armaments, arms control may contribute to the prevention of intra-state war or at least reduce the scale of violence should armed violence nonetheless take place.[22]

States can also use arms control as an instrument to tackle security concerns that arise from their regional security environment. For most countries, it is the regional environment that plays the main role in their security calculations. This is the context within which most states conduct their primary foreign relations and where threats to state security exist in immediate proximity to national borders. The factor of geographical proximity alone binds regional countries together and contributes to the fact that regions have their own security dynamics with idiosyncratic problems as well as autonomous patterns of cooperation and conflict. Arms control at the regional level offers governments a way to deal, during war or peace, with traditional inter-state

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points by inspectors), and unlimited zonal inspection (unlimited inspection rights in specifically defined zones). (Sheehan 1988: 123, 132)

[22] The use of arms control as a tool to address the problem of armed violence in domestic settings has increased concomitantly with the shift in warfare in the post-Cold War era from inter-state to intra-state wars. Generally speaking, the changes in the nature of warfare in the post-Cold War world have included three main developments: a shift from the major powers to minor powers, from Europe to other regions, and from inter-state warfare to intra-state wars (Levy 2002: 351).

relations and with conflict constellations that involve regional non-state actors operating transnationally. (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 10–12, 43 and Lemke 2002: 59, 75)

While most states view their external security environment as primarily consisting of the region they are part of, however, regions themselves are incorporated into the global states system and, therefore, influenced by the actions of the most powerful members of the international system and by developments that are taking place at the system level. Great power intervention through local allies into a region and its security dynamic, motivated by whatever reason, can prove detrimental to the security interests of at least some of the regional states. The security concerns of an individual country may be linked to the system level also if the state in question sees a great power as a direct threat to its national security.[23] Finally, some policies of one or more great powers, such as nuclear arms racing, may threaten the security of all the members of the international system. In this and other cases where system-level actors' military instruments pose a threat, lesser powers can resort to arms control in order to further the cause of national security.

2.3 Arms Control and Diplomacy: The Case of Islamic Iran

2.3.1 The diplomatic actors

Armed forces and diplomacy, understood here as communication between state officials aimed at promoting national objectives either by formal agreement or tacit adjustment (Berridge 2005: 1), constitute the two principal instruments through which states seek to ensure their military and political security. States' security-related diplomacy focuses, above all, on threats, perceived or actual, that emanate from their external environments. With the help of diplomacy, governments seek to ensure that their country will not become a target of military action and, should such action nevertheless take place, to gather international support for their defence efforts and their calls for the ending of the hostilities (Hakovirta 1981: 53 and Visuri 1997: 250).

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[23] Such threat perceptions are common among lesser powers that openly question great power dominance of the international system and call for a new international order. In Escudé's (1998: 55) terminology, the international system is composed of three types of functionally differentiated states: (a) states that command (the great powers); (b) states that obey (the majority of the inter-state community); and (c) rebel states (certain Third World countries that challenge the right of the great powers to dominate the international system).

Islamic Iran, in pursuance of the goal of national security, has relied on diplomacy both during peace- and wartime. Its efforts to indirectly regulate and limit the quantity and quality of other states' military means, as well as the ways in which those resources are put to use, have formed an integral part of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic activities, especially in the area of multilateral diplomacy. Post-revolutionary Iran's activeness in international arms control diplomacy – itself an indication of the dominance of security concerns on Iran's national agenda[24] – has been recognized by outside observers,[25] and Iranian officials themselves have repeatedly underscored the importance of arms control in the Islamic Republic's security policy. According to Iranian officials, arms control issues are of great significance to their country, and, therefore, the Islamic Republic closely follows the international debate on arms control (A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 14).

Like in other states, the main diplomatic actor in Islamic Iran is the country's foreign ministry. And like elsewhere, the Iranian foreign ministry is divided into different administrative units according to the tasks it is expected to fulfill. Normally, foreign ministries are arranged into various units on the basis of two criteria: they are organized either around specific issue areas or regions of the world. In practice, however, the ministries often consist of both functional and geographical units. This is also the case in the Islamic Republic. The Iranian foreign ministry's current organization is based on five main functional units (Legal and International Affairs; Consular and Parliamentary Affairs; Educational and Research Affairs; Economic Affairs; and Administrative and Financial Affairs) and three main geographical units (Europe and the Americas; Arab and African Affairs; and Asia and the Pacific).[26]

The Department for Disarmament and International Security, operating under the unit for Legal and International Affairs, is the Iranian foreign ministry's focal point for arms control-related matters.[27] Many of the department's staff have served the Islamic Republic not only in the ministry in Tehran but also as Iran's representatives in New

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[24] As observed by Maoz (1997: 5): "The extent to which states are concerned with their security is reflected not only in terms of their violent military activity, or in the amount of money they spend on defense, but also in the kind of diplomacy they conduct."

[25] See, for example, Ali (1996: 2) who describes Iran as an "active participant" in international arms control processes and Jones (1998: 40) according to whom Iran has played a "very active role" in international arms control fora.

[26] For the current organizational chart of the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry, visit the ministry's website at <http://www.mfa.gov.ir>.

[27] In 2002, the Department for Disarmament and International Security was staffed by some ten career diplomats (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [A] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

York, Vienna, Geneva, and The Hague – the centers of multilateral arms control diplomacy. These officials have formed a small cadre of Iranian diplomats who have specialized in arms control and sought to promote the interests of the Islamic Republic in international fora dealing with a broad set of security and arms control questions. Apart from the normal job rotation within the foreign ministry, some Iranian arms control diplomats have also held expert positions outside the ministry, among others, in the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the President's Office.

Although the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy has been institutionalized within Iran's foreign ministry, and even though the officials of the foreign ministry – through communication, negotiation, and participation in the work of international fora – hold the prime responsibility for presenting and implementing the various elements of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy, the foreign ministry is not the sole governmental body involved in Iranian arms control diplomacy. The ministry of defence, for example, has had a regular representation in Iranian delegations at international arms control meetings, in addition to which the ministry has been directly in charge of the management of certain national arms control responsibilities, particularly in the area of conventional arms control.

In a similar manner, the AEOI has played a complementary role in the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy by promoting Iran's views on nuclear questions at the meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency and elsewhere. Moreover, the AEOI has acted as an important source of technical and scientific expertise for those deciding on and implementing the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control diplomacy. Given the increasingly specialized nature of the enterprise of arms control, the knowledge and participation of technical and scientific experts has been crucial for the formulation and implementation of Iran's approaches to chemical and biological arms control as well.[28]

But even if not possessing a monopoly on the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy, in the end, however, it is the Iranian foreign ministry that acts as the principal executor of the country's arms control operations and, in consequence, as the main unit of analysis of the present study. In addition to the diplomatic activities of

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[28] It should be further noted here that irrespective of its role as a key decision-making body on Iran's security and foreign policies, the Islamic Republic's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has also been involved in practical arms control diplomacy by assigning its secretary – in 2003 when the question of Iran's nuclear efforts became a central issue on the international agenda – as the chief Iranian negotiator on the country's nuclear program (Ruhani 2005: 4).

communication, negotiation, and participation in various international settings, Iran's foreign ministry carries out functions that are crucial to arms control decision-making in the Islamic Republic. Through the collection and analysis of information, and the provision of advice on policy options, the foreign ministry is capable of indirectly influencing the decision-making process.[29]

Furthermore, and as emphasized by Hill (2003: 77), foreign ministries around the world perform an invaluable function of acting as the institutional memory of a state's foreign relations. The importance of such memory, and the policy continuity associated with it, became startlingly evident in Iran following the country's 1979 revolution. During the first years after the revolution, when the new power elite in Iran was preoccupied with domestic issues and with the creation and the battle over the dominance of the post-monarchical Iranian political system, the country's foreign ministry and its remaining bureaucracy succeeded in preventing the total collapse of post-revolutionary Iran's diplomatic activities. That the foreign ministry managed, despite the resignations and purges that took place in the immediate aftermath of the revolution and dramatically affected the ministry, to continue to perform some of its functions proved vital for the Islamic Republic, especially after it had become involved in a war with Iraq in September 1980.[30]

By the end of 1982, largely as a result of the theocratic forces' successful consolidation of power in post-revolutionary Iran, the turmoil within the foreign ministry had significantly settled down (Menashri 1990: 245). The ministry's staff had been reshuffled and restructured to correspond with the needs and aspirations of the Islamic Republic's religious powerholders.[31] Yet the inexperience of the new officials or what the Iranian president at the time characterized as "the apostles of the revolution" (Ramazani 1983: 19–20), together with the fact that ideological credentials had become the main recruitment criterion in government, meant that Iran's main body of diplomacy had fallen into the hands of initially incompetent officials – a development not untypical for Third World countries experiencing a regime change (Dessouki and Korany 1991: 21–22).

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[29] It is also presumable that the foreign ministry itself functions as the ultimate decision-maker in diplomatic arms control matters that are of technical or routine nature.

[30] For the organizational problems faced by the Iranian foreign ministry in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, see Ramazani (1983: 19–21) and Menashri (1990: 9, 97, 245).

[31] It should be mentioned that the Iranian foreign ministry's first diplomat recruitment and training program under the Islamic Republic was launched in 1982. Some of Iran's current arms control officials

2.3.2 Arms control in the Middle East

While states may use arms control as a tool to respond to security pressures that arise both from their domestic and external security environments, most often the arms control steps taken by governments aim at influencing the latter. The focus, then, is on developments occurring at regional and international levels, and not only on the behaviour of other states but transnational actors as well.[32] Just as in an inter-state constellation, a competetive relationship between a state and a transnational actor may lead to the use of armed force and, consequently, pose a direct threat to the state's national security.[33]

For the great majority of states, including Iran, the geographic and functional range of concern in activities related to external security is limited first and foremost, and irrespective of occasional declarations by some countries to the contrary, to their immediate regional environments. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that only few states have the capacity to operate as global powers exerting major influence at the international level. On the other hand, and as reminded by Buzan and Wæver (2003: 12), most security threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones.

According to Tibi (1998: 36), there are three factors that define a region in the international system and separate them from one another: geographical continuity, regionally interconnecting – socio-economic, political, cultural, and ethnic – structures, and a certain density of interaction. Such interaction can take the form of cooperation, but may also manifest various patterns of conflict. Indeed, the definitions of the Middle Eastern regional system, Iran's primary external security environment, often take the conflictual character of the Middle East as their conceptual point of departure.[34] By the same token, the conflicts that have taken place in the Middle East are often referred to

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are graduates of the 1982 course. (Author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [B] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2000)

[32] Transnational actors can be defined as private groups or individuals who, while requiring physical facilities inside states, do not need governments in order to conduct international relations. They can be divided into three broad classes: territorial, ideological/cultural, and economic. Territorial transnational actors are either using or seeking some territorial base, whereas ideological/cultural actors aim at spreading their worldviews and ideas across national borders. The main goal of economic transnational actors is to create wealth. (Hill 2003: 195–203)

[33] Of course, a relationship between a state and a transnational actor can also be based on cooperation and dialogue or on a situation where the parties do not necessarily need and are not interested in each other (ibid.: 203–208).

[34] See, for example, the discussion by Tibi (1998: 43–60) who argues that "it is in fact conflicts that bind states into a regional system."

as benchmarks in the history of the region and as important shapers of regional identities (Jacoby and Sasley 2002: 3).

Using Buzan's (1991: 190) conceptualization, the Middle East can be defined as a security complex, that is, as a "group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."[35] From this perspective, then, the Middle East comprises an entity with its own security dynamics that makes the region internally interdependent and externally distinct from other security regions (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 47–48).[36] What is of particular interest here is to know to what extent and how Islamic Iran has utilized arms control to deal with security concerns peculiar to the Middle Eastern security complex.

Generally speaking, arms control has played a very limited role in the Middle Eastern states' security policies. Due to the numerous conflicts and rivalries simultaneously at play in the region, and because of the popularity of the political philosophy of war among Middle Eastern decision-makers, the governments of the region have founded their security policies almost exclusively on military instruments. The poor state – and in some cases the absence – of diplomatic relations and channels of inter-governmental communication have further undermined efforts to find negotiated solutions to the region's security problems. Also the fact that the conflicts of the Middle East often overlap and involve a complex set of players and military balances has made it highly difficult to establish an acceptable basis for regional arms control talks (Steinberg 1993: 169–170 and Karsh et al. 1996: 43–45).

Arms control efforts in the Middle East have additionally been marred by foreign interference and interventions in regional affairs. Even though, since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, local conflicts and rivalries have to a large extent dictated the character and form of the Middle East's security landscape, the policies of extra-regional powers vis-à-vis the region have added an extra dimension to it. Whether through direct military operations, the use of local allies as proxies, or through arms transfers, motivated by the prospect of political and economic profits, extra-regional

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[35] For a refinement of the concept of security complex, see Buzan et al. (1998). Lemke's (2002: 71) notion of a state's "relevant neighborhood" – the portion of the globe within which a state can operate militarily or exert military influence – is another conceptual attempt to divide the international system, in security terms, into various regional sub-systems.

[36] Hinnebusch's (2003: 10) observation that, today, there is not a single country in the Middle East that has not come to feel a military threat from one or more of its neighbours is indicative of the security interdependence among the region's states.

powers' pursuit of self-interest in the Middle East has contributed to the militarization of a regional system already fraught with instability and fierce quantitative and qualitative competition over armaments, both conventional and WMD. (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 187, 201; Ehteshami 2002: 257, 264 and Steinberg 1993: 170)

The characteristics of the Middle Eastern regional system make it thus easy to understand why very few attempts at arms control have been made within the region. Nevertheless, the Middle East has not been totally immune to arms control arrangements. First of all, the region has been the target of numerous arms control initiatives made by extra-regional states. Apart from the most recent ones, which are discussed in the chapters that follow, the Cold War period produced a number of proposals that sought to limit the regional states' access to weapons technology, such as the so-called Tripartite Declaration of 1950 and a number of unilateral initiatives put forward by the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.[37] Yet, none of these 'supply-side' efforts ultimately managed to make a real difference either because the initiating parties themselves at some point ceased to respect the terms of their proposals or because the participation of all relevant arms manufacturers was never achieved.

Secondly, some Middle Eastern countries themselves have managed to agree on mutual, though strictly restricted, arms control arrangements. Thus, in the 1970s, following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, for example, Egypt and Israel signed a series of agreements that sought to prevent armaments concentrations in the Sinai Peninsula and the Egyptian-Israeli border areas. The relations between Israel and Syria have included corresponding arrangements with regard to Lebanon and the Golan Heights.[38] The diplomatic deliberations within the so-called Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group – one of the five groups of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process – during the early 1990s, the modest confidence-building measures between Iran and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms during the presidencies of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami, together with the regular regional calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon- or WMD-free zone in the Middle East serve as more recent reminders of the fact that arms control is not merely a theoretical option for the regional states' security policies.

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[37] For the details of these Cold War-period arms control initiatives, see Steinberg (1993: 174–176) and Karsh et al. (1996: 34–35).

[38] For the Egyptian-Israeli and Israeli-Syrian agreements, see Tanner (1993: 39–40) and Steinberg (1993: 176–177).

2.3.3 The international issue arenas

Even though arms control, both bilateral and multilateral, has occupied only a marginal place in the Middle Eastern security configuration, the regional states' military behaviour is nevertheless partly regulated by certain global arms control agreements – provided, of course, that the countries in question have joined them in the first place. On the other hand, these global agreements, together with the international bodies and fora that deal with arms control questions, concurrently provide the states of the Middle East a diplomatic avenue to promote not only their international but their regional security interests as well. In other words, the arms control deliberations taking place in multilateral diplomatic contexts enable the Middle Eastern states to simultaneously raise concerns that are seen as arising from the two spatial components of their external security environment: the regional and the international.

Following the 1979 revolution, Iran's theocratic political forces openly declared their suspicious attitude towards international treaties and organizations. Highly critical of the state of affairs in world politics, they generally regarded such treaties and organizations as manifestations and tools of the major powers' efforts to dominate the world. Soon, however, Iran's new powerholders had to reexamine – if not at ideological, at practical level at least – their position. This was due, above all, to the ramifications of the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980. Under military attack, Iran's leaders had no choice but to mobilize the nation's resources and to make use of international channels for the sake of the war effort.[39] As a consequence, and not unexpectedly, the war also gave a major boost to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic activities in the area of arms control and to the Islamic Republic's participation in the work of international issue arenas dealing with security and arms control.

Ever since the start of the Iran–Iraq war, the United Nations and the various fora that are part of its so-called arms control machinery have constituted the principal diplomatic arena of operation for the Islamic Republic's arms control officials. The UN machinery consists, first of all, of the UN General Assembly and its subsidiary organs. The arms control-related responsibilities of the General Assembly are mentioned in article 11 of the UN Charter which states that the General Assembly "may consider the

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[39] The visit by Muhammad Ali Rajai, the then Iranian prime minister, to New York in October 1980 to address the UN Security Council was widely seen at the time as a tacit acknowledgement on the part of Iran's theocratic leadership that it was in the Islamic Republic's interest to participate in the work of the world organization and in multilateral diplomacy (Sick 1991: 158).

general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both."

Based on article 11, the General Assembly has, since the establishment of the UN in 1945,[40] adopted numerous arms control resolutions every year. The drafting of these resolutions has been the responsibility of the General Assembly's First Committee, the subsidiary organ whose annual sessions in New York, usually held between October–November, focus on questions pertaining to international security and arms control. The task of the UN Disarmament Commission, the other subsidiary organ of the General Assembly dealing with arms control, in turn, has been to continue the work of the First Committee when the General Assembly is out of session. The Commission – which, similarly to the General Assembly and the First Committee, has a universal membership – convenes at UN headquarters each spring for four weeks and is mandated to submit concrete recommendations on specific arms control matters and to follow up on the decisions of the General Assembly's special sessions on disarmament.[41] The Commission does not pass draft resolutions, but submits reports of its annual deliberations to the General Assembly.

Whereas the General Assembly, its First Committee, and the UN Disarmament Commission are essentially deliberative bodies, the Security Council of the world organization has powers to take coercive arms control steps against the members of the international community if it concludes that their actions are threatening international peace and security. As a result, the arms control-related activities of the Security Council have included decisions on the enactment of arms restraints on a number of individual countries.[42] Apart from dealing with situations declared as threats to international peace and security, the arms control tasks of the Security Council under the UN Charter consist of the responsibility to formulate plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments (article 26). Accordingly, the Security Council

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[40] Iran became a member state of the United Nations on 24 October 1945.

[41] So far, the General Assembly has held three special sessions on disarmament – in 1978, 1982, and 1988. The special sessions notwithstanding, the General Assembly has two other types of sessions: regular annual sessions and emergency special sessions.

[42] The partial disarmament of Iraq following the 1990–1991 Kuwait crisis, discussed later, is a prime example of the arms control measures authorized by the Security Council against an individual country. For other cases, see Croft (1996: 167–189).

has been involved, in a number of ways, in promoting the establishment of global controls on armaments.

Given that the actions of the Security Council have been part and parcel of great power politics and ultimately always dependent on the views of its five permanent member states equipped with veto powers, it has never been a focal venue for Iran's and other lesser powers' arms control diplomacy. As far as the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament is concerned, however, the opposite is true.[43] As the international community's only body dedicated to arms control negotiations, the CD constitutes a valuable arena for Iranian diplomacy. The fact that the CD operates by consensus offers the Iranians the theoretical, if not always the actual, possibility to overrule any decision they deem as contrary to their interests.

Although officially not a UN body, the CD is in many ways linked to the UN and its arms control machinery. The budget of the CD, for example, is included in the UN budget, the meetings of the CD are held on UN premises and serviced by UN personnel, and the CD submits its annual report to the General Assembly. Many of the most important international arms control treaties – including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty – have been negotiated in the CD. Since the completion of the CTBT, opened for signature in September 1996, however, the CD has been in an effective standstill, for it has not been able to agree on the commencement of further negotiations.

While usually not viewed as part of the UN arms control machinery, the IAEA, one of the world organization's specialized agencies, carries out tasks that are of direct relevance to nuclear arms control.[44] Similarly, the review mechanisms and conferences of international arms control treaties, such as the NPT and the BTWC, provide states with the opportunity to present and promote their positions in a specific field of arms control. The same applies to the international organizations that have been established by certain multilateral arms control conventions, such as the CWC, and charged with the task of implementing the provisions of those treaties.

The meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, even if normally dealing with a wide array of issues, have acted as further

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[43] Iran became a member of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, the predecessor of the CD, in 1975. The CD itself was established in 1979 following the UN General Assembly's first special session on disarmament.

[44] Iran became a member of the IAEA in 1958.

diplomatic avenues for Islamic Iran's arms control diplomacy. Although Iran had supported many of the objectives pursued by the NAM – if not the principle of non-alignment per se – already before the revolution (Korany 1986: 12), post-revolutionary Iran's interpretation of the role of non-alignment has dramatically differed from that of the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime. In contrast to the Shah's government, which had combined Iran's support to NAM objectives with a tight alliance with the West and the United States, in particular, the leaders of the Islamic Republic have regarded independence from dominant global powers as a fundamental tenet of Iranian foreign policy.[45]

But due to the inevitable clashes of interest within a grouping with a large and heterogeneous membership, and because of the Islamic Republic's unique conception of non-alignment,[46] the arms control positions of Iran, one of the most active NAM actors in the field of arms control, have not always evoked supportive responses from other NAM countries. Similarly, the Islamic Republic's diplomacy at the OIC has been a source of occasional controversy among the member states. While currently one of the leading OIC players in arms control diplomacy, the Islamic Republic's relations with the organization have a history of mutual suspicions, for during the first decade of the Islamic Republic, Iranian leaders openly dismissed the Jeddah-based organization as a reactionary tool of Western imperialism and the Saudi monarchy (Marschall 2003: 47–48). Since the end of the Iran–Iraq war, however, the Islamic Republic has increasingly viewed the OIC as an important diplomatic arena for the promotion of its interests (Roshandel 2000: 110, 116).

Still, rather than serving as arenas for major diplomatic openings, the meetings of both the NAM and the OIC provide Iran and the other member states involved in arms control diplomacy a venue for the formulation of common positions and policies to be introduced in global arms control fora. In addition, the NAM and the OIC act as operative reference groups for the member states within the global arms control fora themselves – whether within the arms control machinery of the UN, the CD, the IAEA,

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[45] Iran declared its commitment to an explicit policy of non-alignment immediately after the 1979 revolution. As part of this policy, Iran formally applied to join the NAM in June 1979 and its foreign minister participated in the movement's Havana summit of September 1979 (Menashri 1990: 96). Subsequently, the principle of non-alignment also became enshrined into the Islamic Republic's constitution, its article 152.

[46] According to Sadri (1999: 35–36), the Islamic Republic's policy of non-alignment has differed from mainstream NAM approach in two main respects. First, it has been more critical of the prevailing international order and the policies of the great powers, and, secondly, it has placed more importance on the issue of cultural independence.

or in connection with individual arms control treaties. In both contexts, the member states of the NAM and the OIC can resort to collective action in order to try to gain the kind of bargaining power they are incapable of wielding individually.

The Islamic Republic's deep involvement in multilateral arms control diplomacy has not meant that it has uncritically committed itself to whatever arms control arrangements agreed upon by other members of the international community. Quite the opposite, the Iranian leadership has not hesitated to reject initiatives and agreements that it has considered unfavourable to the interests of the Islamic Republic. Yet, at the same time, the Iranians have not had access to all the international arms control fora they have wanted to operate in. What they have been particularly irritated about is that they have not been allowed to take part in the diplomatic discussions of those associations – such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and the Australia Group (AG) – that have taken arms control steps against their country. As a result of the international arms control measures that have been directed at the Islamic Republic since its inception, then, the officials of the Islamic Republic have been forced to occasionally perform not only as proponents but, while defending their government, as opponents of arms control as well.

2.3.4 The objectives of arms control: the theoretical spectrum

The existence of international issue arenas devoted to arms control and the institutionalization of arms control as a distinct functional area within state bureaucracies demonstrate that arms control diplomacy has become a routine instrument for the promotion of states' national security interests. But in spite of the established position of arms control as an independent sector of state diplomacy aiming to influence the military behaviour of domestic and external actors, in practice, its objectives frequently intermingle with those of the other sectors of diplomacy. This may occur, for example, when an arms control issue takes on a life of its own and transforms from a security matter into a question of national prestige (Legg and Morrison 1991: 60). More often, however, states deliberately link arms control with diplomatic issues that do not necessarily have anything to do with the goal of security (Schear 1993: 427 and Croft

1996: 10).[47] In this way, then, arms control diplomacy exits the domain of security and becomes a general instrument of foreign policy.[48]

While the foreign policy objectives states try to achieve by taking part in arms control diplomacy are potentially numerous,[49] country-specific,[50] and time-bound,[51] their origins are traceable to certain core goals that have been common to states throughout history. In other words, the foreign policy objectives of a state can always be viewed as serving, and stemming from, one or more of these timeless goals of foreign policy.[52] Basing his conclusions on a survey of theoretical IR literature, Raymond (1987: 102–103) identifies six fundamental goals of foreign policy, each composed of specific substantive elements: (a) security (physical survival, territorial integrity, political independence); (b) welfare (prosperity, economic development, well-being); (c) prestige (recognition, status, respect, honor); (d) ideological self-extension (promotion of values, conversion); (e) material self-extension (power, territorial expansion, exclusive access); and (f) self-abnegation (peace, rectitude, international solidarity).[53]

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[47] Note, for example, the episode from September 1998 when Iran reportedly vetoed the admission of Ireland to CD membership in order to punish the Irish government for its criticism of Iran's human rights situation (*Arms Control Today*, August/September 1998). Already prior to 1998, the Islamic Republic had used the issue of CD membership as a diplomatic trump card against at least Israel and Iraq (CD/PV.670, 1994).

[48] As observed by Sheehan (1988: 119), arms control deliberations have become a means through which states "attempt to gain traditional foreign policy goals while focusing their manoeuvring in a single arena." In addition to making linkages between arms control and other foreign policy issues, governments sometimes make their participation in one arms control process conditional on progress in another.

[49] Generally, states pursue numerous foreign policy objectives simultaneously. Some of them can be in conflict with one another, and sometimes the actions taken to achieve one objective contribute to the achievement of another. Naturally, states do not place the same value or priority on all of their various foreign policy objectives at any one given time. Similarly, they do not attach the same urgency to the achievement of their individual objectives. (Hill 2003: 118; Holsti 1992: 113 and Legg and Morrison 1991: 60–61)

[50] Whatever its nature, a state's foreign policy always reflects and seeks to promote national needs and purposes. As purposive, goal-directed action, foreign policy tries to influence, above all, the behaviour of other states, and is, at the same time, influenced by those states' own goal-directed behaviour. (Hill 2003: 285; Richardson 1987: 165 and Holsti 1977: 138, 140). Rothgeb (1995: 34) defines the international system as the "patterns of interaction that exist among the actors around the world who pursue policies designed to further their foreign policy goals and interests."

[51] As noted by Mansbach and Vasquez (1981: 11), the issues in world politics change in the course of time in terms of substance, the patterns of behaviour that characterize them, and the cast of actors that interact over them.

[52] For the conceptual distinction between foreign policy goals and objectives, see Hakovirta (1981: 49 and 2002: 146); Raymond (1987: 100, 103) and Legg and Morrison (1991: 59). Though treating arms control purely as an instrument of security policy and relying on different terminology, Kartchner's (1996: 19, 32) discussion of "grand strategy level" and "operational level" arms control objectives captures the idea of the goal-objective distinction. In his conceptualization, the broadly stated objectives of grand strategy are translated at the operational level "into more specific goals" to guide actual arms control activities.

[53] For other classifications of foreign policy goals that come very close to that of Raymond, see Hakovirta (2002: 146–152); Holsti (1992: 83–109) and Legg and Morrison (1991: 62–63).

The objectives that states pursue in order to achieve protection from actual and perceived security threats naturally constitute the core of their diplomatic activities in the area of arms control. The history and practice of arms control shows, however, that states view the potential security benefits of arms control diplomacy as going beyond the regulation of armed actors' military choices and beyond the traditional objectives of lessening the risk of intentional and accidental war and of limiting the consequences of war should it nevertheless occur.[54] Resultantly, states have regarded arms control processes also as important channels to maintain diplomatic dialogue between adversaries. Such communication, even when the arms control deliberations themselves are not progressing, has been viewed as potentially contributing to greater understanding between the participants and gradually leading to improvements in their political relationships (Sheehan 1988: 11–12 and Croft 1996: 14). Furthermore, and especially in the post-Cold War period, arms control has often been associated with efforts to manage transitions from conflict situations to stable peace in regions where the risk of inter- or intra-state wars looms large.[55]

Of course, there is always the possibility that arms control dialogue between adversaries damages rather than improves their relations. The prospect of such development increases if the parties conclude that their adversaries use arms control purely as a means to gain unilateral advantages. Indeed, states may take part in arms control processes with the purpose of obtaining security benefits without actually wanting to commit themselves to the limitations under consideration. For example, they may try to use arms control diplomacy as a way of obtaining useful intelligence gains. By the same token, governments may use arms control arenas to spread false information about their armament programs or to buy time for the completion of their military build-ups. In such cases, arms control diplomacy is reduced to a tool of deception that aims at promoting security by hiding true military intentions. (Taylor 1996: 42; Sheehan 1988: 118 and Schear 1993: 427)

Reflective of the fact that arms control diplomacy does not exist in isolation from broader considerations of foreign policy, states have used it for other than security-related purposes, too. The reduction of military costs has traditionally been considered

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[54] These traditional objectives are explicitly mentioned in most definitions of the concept of arms control. See, for example, Brown (1987: 173); Laurance (1996: 358) and Chalmers (1997: 280).

[55] As noted by Chalmers (1997: 280–281), the use of arms control as part of conflict prevention and resolution efforts has increasingly turned it into an instrument that can potentially prevent states from being undermined from within.

the second primary rationale of arms control. On the one hand, those who emphasize the economic benefits of arms control have argued that high levels of expenditure on armaments undermine the growth of national economies. On the other hand, some states and those of the developing world, in particular, have alluded to the importance of arms control as a means of redirecting resources from military production to international development assistance. Finally, states have occasionally taken part in arms control agreements in the hope that their participation would be economically rewarded in the form of enhanced trade opportunities. (Buzan and Herring 1998: 213; Marlin and Brauer 1993: 345–346 and Johnson 1998: 85)

Even though the argument that military costs hinder economic growth continues to play a major role in diplomatic argumentation, the claim itself rests on a shaky empirical foundation, for some studies suggest that military expenditures may actually stimulate economic growth. Moreover, arms control negotiations may sometimes produce agreements which, with the principle of balance in view, in fact legitimate increases in armaments, or, alternatively, trigger arms competition in areas still not regulated. But whatever the relative strength of the arguments on the economic consequences of arms control,[56] the fact remains that, historically, arms control agreements have rarely put much weight on economic considerations. And as far as the link drawn between arms control and increased international development assistance is concerned, it has remained a notion without practical manifestations. (Sheehan 1988: 64–65, 79, 81; Marlin and Brauer 1993: 346 and Taylor 1996: 50)

The arms control objectives stemming from security and economic considerations notwithstanding, international arms control talks have also offered states an opportunity to promote those foreign policy goals that are referred to in Raymond's inventory as prestige, ideological self-extension, material self-extension, and self-abnegation. States may try, for example, to use arms control deliberations to gain respect from other countries. Similarly, states may use arms control arenas to present and promote their ideological premises. Furthermore, arms control diplomacy may sometimes serve states' efforts to increase their influence vis-à-vis other countries. Conversely, those countries that are unhappy with prevailing power relations, which are often more or less explicitly locked into individual arms control treaties, may use arms control diplomacy to express

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[56] It should be noted that in addition to those who either support or oppose the claim that military spending hinders economic growth, there is a school of thought, a middle position, concluding that the economic impact of military spending is unclear or neutral (Marlin and Brauer 1993: 346).

their dissatisfaction and to try to change the existing circumstances. Finally, the history of arms control knows instances where the willingness of statesmen to advance arms control has been grounded in the altruistic intention of acting for the good of the mankind. (Schear 1993: 426, 431–433 and Johnson 1998: 85)

When arms control diplomacy, principally a security-related realm of state activity, merges with a state's general foreign policy, it simultaneously also becomes a potential instrument of domestic politics. In other words, like any other area of foreign policy, arms control diplomacy can be used to promote governments' and regimes' domestic political interests. Consequently, the content of a state's arms control diplomacy, whether in a general sense or in connection with talks on a particular treaty or issue, may be influenced by the perceived impact of the adopted diplomatic position on domestic political competition or electoral prospects. By the same token, state officials may resort to provocative arms control diplomacy in the hope that it would divert attention away from domestic issues or problems. (Johnson 1998: 85; Burns 1993b: 7 and Sheehan 1988: 118)

The potentially multiple functions of arms control diplomacy in the realization of national foreign policy objectives explain why states that are uninterested in arms control in security terms, either generally or with regard to a specific issue, nevertheless often take part in international arms control deliberations.[57] Yet, states often carefully weigh the costs and benefits of such participation. Speaking of a specific multilateral arms control treaty process, for example, we can differentiate between three kinds of calculations that states may make: those determining whether they become interested in the issue in the first place; those dictating whether they become involved in actual treaty negotiations; and, finally, those that determine whether states commit themselves to the final treaty document. If a state views the potential costs of an arms control agreement as exceeding the potential benefits, it may take part in the negotiation process but mask its disinterest in an agreement by floating one-sided proposals that have no real hope of gaining other participants' approval. By taking the initiative, it can claim to have tried to reach a deal and place the onus for non-agreement on other states. (Schear 1993: 425 and Sheehan 1988: 118)

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[57] Van Evera (1999: 2) offers an alternative explanation for states' participation in arms control diplomacy by stating that "failed peace ideas – for example, disarmament, pacifism, and large reliance on international institutions to resolve conflict – remain popular for lack of better alternatives."

Although the various sectors of state diplomacy occasionally overlap each other in substantive and functional terms, the activities within each sector normally center around a list of specific issues and the relating objectives with which the relevant state officials are concerned. Basically, the issues on diplomatic agendas stem from one of two sources: either from a state's domestic or its external environment. Sometimes, thus, the objectives formulated by national decision-makers are linked to issues that have domestic roots and sometimes they are part of national reactions to issues imposed by external actors and circumstances. (Hermann 2001: 53; Legg and Morrison 1991: 64 and Hill 2003: 20–21, 26, 44)

If hoping to realize their arms control objectives through diplomacy, governments need to get the individual issues they are occupied with placed on the agendas of one or more other states. There are four stages through which an issue has to pass in order to become recognized as a question that needs to be internationally – either bilaterally or multilaterally – attended to. First, the issue needs to be initiated. In other words, state representatives need to articulate a grievance and make it public. Secondly, state officials have to translate the grievance into diplomatic demands, after which they are faced with the task of gathering support for those demands. With enough support, the issue ceases to be a subject of initial public discussion and becomes an item on the relevant actors' formal agendas. (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 92)

Powerful states obviously play a key role in determining which arms control issues reach the formal agenda stage. While their agenda-setting powers are to some extent limited by the fact that individual arms control questions may exhibit various patterns of authority and dominance, as well as by the initiatives put forward by inter- and non-governmental international organizations,[58] they often have the diplomatic capabilities to offset those influences and to push through their own arms control agendas. And later, when the issues that have reached formal agendas become subject to detailed deliberations, the dominant states' agenda-setting powers transform into decision-forcing influence. For one thing, dominant states have the capacity to make substantial decisions about arms control by themselves or with one another. For another, they can confer legitimacy on most of the arms control decisions and arrangements made by the

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[58] Generally speaking, the foreign policies of states are constrained by the following external factors: (a) other states' foreign policies; (b) the actions of inter-governmental organizations; (c) transnational processes, including the activities of international non-governmental organizations; (d) international law; and (f) informal norms (Hill 2003: 174 and Webber and Smith 2002: 64–65).

members of the international community. (Hill 2003: 166; Karns and Mingst 1987: 460, 462 and Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 92, 96)

Because of the central position dominant states play in international arms control diplomacy, the success of lesser powers' arms control initiatives frequently depends on the major powers' views on them. If the issues raised by lesser powers are in the interest of the major powers as well, there is a good chance that they move to the formal agendas of the actors whose positions on those questions are crucial – and vice versa. On the other hand, even if uninterested in or unfamiliar with them, lesser powers often have to respond to the arms control initiatives made by the major powers. Although lesser powers' responses to arms control initiatives depend on the salience of those initiatives to their own interests, as well as on their estimation of the influence they can wield on particular arms control questions internationally, their reactions to the proposals made by the major powers are often necessitated by the need to gain major power support for questions that are of importance to themselves. And of course, the history of arms control knows plenty of cases where major power pressure has been the main, if not the sole, reason for a weaker actor to take part in arms control. (Karns and Mingst 1987: 461–462 and Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 96–98)

2.4 Arms Control Decision-Making in the Islamic Republic

After having defined arms control not only as an instrument of Islamic Iran's security policy, but also as an element of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy,[59] we need to try to answer two further analytical questions. First: what do we mean by the Islamic Republic in terms of decision-making? Who are the Iranian political actors that decide on the Islamic Republic's security and foreign policies?[60] Secondly: what are the characteristics of the decision-making process whereby one view of what is good for the Islamic Republic becomes dominant over another?

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[59] The term 'foreign policy' can be defined as the sum of official external relations conducted by a state in international relations (Hill 2003: 3). Iranian arms control operations thus form a part of the totality of Iran's external relations, that is, of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. Foreign policy analysts argue that the individual state actions that make up foreign policy are often held together and guided by some kind of a 'meta-principle.' This principle has been referred to in the literature, among others, as "foreign policy orientation" (Holsti 1977: 108–109), "foreign policy line" (Hakovirta 1981: 59 and 2002: 178), and "foreign policy tradition" (Hill 2003: 248).

[60] As noted by Hermann (2001: 48), there is within any government a person or a set of persons capable of committing the resources of the society and the authority to make decisions that cannot be readily reversed. Hermann calls this set of national decision-makers "the authoritative decision unit."

Before delving into the issue of arms control decision-making in Islamic Iran, however, it is necessary to point out that many aspects of the phenomenon have been shrouded in mystery. As a result of the secrecy that surrounds security and foreign policy decision-making in the Islamic Republic, we do not know for sure who has actually defined the issues that have been placed on the Iranian arms control agenda or formulated the associated national objectives. In the same vain, we do not know for sure who has actually planned Iran's responses to those arms control questions that have been imposed on the Islamic Republic by external actors and circumstances. Furthermore, it is unclear who in Iran has determined the means and the targets of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations. And finally, in addition to often not knowing what the actual contents of Iranian arms control decisions have been, the information about the processes through which arms control decisions in the Islamic Republic have been reached remains imperfect.

Despite these obstacles, however, the existing research literature on Islamic Iran's security and foreign policy decision-making helps us to identify the types and the cast of actors that have supposedly played the main role in the formulation of Iranian arms control operations. The information generated by Iran experts also allows us to hypothesize about the features of the arms control decision-making process in the Islamic Republic. The first research question related to the decision-making process is to determine whether the actors with the authority to make arms control decisions for Iran have formed what Hermann et al. (1987: 311–313) call a self-contained decision unit or whether they have been susceptible to extra-unit domestic influences.

2.4.1 Extra-elite influences

The field of political thinking and activity in modern Iran has revolved around four principal traditions or models of politics: the monarchical, the liberal nationalist, the religious, and the leftist (Kazemi 1995). Historically, the power constellation between these forces has been straightforward. The monarchists have controlled the Iranian state, whereas the supporters of the other three models, while in competition with each other, have sought to challenge and undermine the monarchists' dominance.

Yet the modern history of Iran also knows a number of momentous occasions when the forces critical of the monarchy have set aside their mutual differences and cooperated in opposing the monarchist policies. Of course, the Iranian revolution of

1979 was the most dramatic manifestation of such cooperation. United by their struggle against Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran's opposition forces succeeded in ousting the Pahlavi regime and thereby relegating the monarchical model to the margins of contemporary Iranian politics. Soon after the revolution, in the matter of months, however, the temporary collaboration between Iran's liberal nationalist, religious, and leftist forces itself started to break down. And in the end, it was the religious forces – more precisely, the religious forces that subscribed to Ayatollah Khomeini's reading of Islam – that won the power struggle that ensued in the newly established Islamic Republic.[61]

Ever since their monopolization and institutionalization of political power in post-Pahlavi Iran, the representatives of the Khomeinian theocratic state – very much alike their monarchist predecessors – have done their utmost to ensure that the competing models of Iranian politics will not pose a challenge to their dominant position. In spite of the authoritarian nature of Iran's theocratic state, however, it would be inaccurate to portray the Islamic Republic's political elite as a homogenous group without internal divisions. Because of regime fragmentation,[62] Islamic Iran's security and foreign policy decision-makers, just like their counterparts in most other countries, have to play what Putnam (1988) calls a two-level game: they have to simultaneously cope with pressures and constraints stemming from domestic politics as well as with those of the international reality.[63]

In theoretical terms, there are at least four basic kinds of domestic actors who may want to try to influence a state's arms control decision-making and whose views and interests may collide with those of the country's authoritative decision unit. First of all,

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[61] While it is the religious class that currently rules Iran, not all Iranian clerics – in fact, presumably the majority of them do not – approve direct clerical participation in politics. Moshaver (2005: 175) refers to the politically active Iranian clerics who support the country's existing political system as the "regime clergy" in order to differentiate them from the representatives of the clerical class who either oppose the current system or refrain from politics. For a discussion of these anti-establishment clerics in today's Iran, see Buchta (2000: 88–97).

[62] The concept of regime fragmentation, as defined by Hagan (1987: 344), concerns the degree to which a government's central political leadership is fragmented by persisting internal divisions.

[63] As pointed out by Putnam (1988: 434), the two-level game is about national decision-makers' attempt to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Placing states' arms control operations in the context of the two-level game, Sheehan (1988: 83) characterizes the situation faced by national decision-makers as follows: "Modern international arms control is a process involving two sets of parallel negotiations which are both crucial to the outcome of attempts by states to enter into arms control security relationships. On the one hand, there are the bilateral or multilateral negotiations between the states themselves [...]. On the other hand, there is the debate and bargaining within states both as to the negotiation strategy and tactics to be employed at the international talks and that relating to the domestic wheeling and dealing which is required in order to

the authoritative decision unit may be challenged by actors belonging to the leadership echelon itself. Ideological differences, power struggles, as well as competing institutional and bureaucratic interests may divide a state's leadership into various groupings with distinct approaches to arms control. Secondly, the members of the legislature and other non-executive branches of government may have their own ideas of what their country should do in the area of arms control. Thirdly, politically active segments of the society, often representing certain interest group concerns, may be actively involved in national arms control debates. Finally, the public opinion can play an important role in the arms control choices made by national decision-makers. (Hagan 1987: 342–343)

As far as the case of Islamic Iran is concerned, however, the input of the Iranian public on the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions has been very limited. Generally, the regime's military and security policies have not been the subject of public debate, and even when they have been dealt with in public, the discussion has been kept within carefully defined boundaries. Moreover, the Iranian leaders' readiness to use coercive power to silence their critics has led to self-censorship not only among the Iranian public but also among the country's media which operate under close state control.

The regime's control over information and propaganda has also meant that the Iranian public has been poorly informed of the Islamic Republic's operations in the area of arms control. And even when information has been made public by state officials, it has often served the regime's manipulative purposes. Like in many other authoritarian Third World countries, the state officials in the Islamic Republic have exploited their information monopoly to obtain the general public's legitimation and support for the regime and its policies. References to real and imagined foreign threats, appeals to nationalism and Islam, and depictions of the country's leadership as possessing special wisdom that guarantees Iran's national security, foreign policy interests, and international status, have been among the methods exploited by the Iranian regime to mobilize the country's general public behind it.[64] (Hagan 1995: 129–130)

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produce a majority behind the eventual agreement. It is not always obvious that the international aspect is the more important of the two."

[64] According to Chubin (2006: 58–59), who bases his observation on Iran's nuclear arms control diplomacy, the Iranian officials' tendency to manipulate information and to frame issues according to their own interests has also led to official statements and claims characterized by what he calls "an alarming degree of ignorance or oversimplification."

Yet, in spite of the general public's marginal role in Iranian arms control decision-making, the officials of the Islamic Republic have, over the years, regularly alluded to the expectations and demands of the Iranian people as a factor that significantly influences the content of Iran's arms control policy. That these deliberately inaccurate claims have principally stemmed from the Iranian officials' tactical effort to rationalize their government's arms control operations in international contexts is further illustrated by the fact that arms control has hardly ever been – except perhaps during the final stages of the Iran–Iraq war when Iraq's use of chemical weapons intensified and Iraq started to target Iranian cities, especially Tehran, with its surface-to-surface missiles (SSM) – high on ordinary Iranians personal agendas under the Islamic Republic.[65]

The lack of extra-elite input into Iran's arms control decision-making becomes even more evident when one takes into account the fact that the country has not had independent non-governmental organizations (NGO) focusing on arms control issues,[66] as well as the fact that the pressure groups that have been close to the regime, such as the numerous revolutionary foundations, rarely have had a stake in arms control decision-making – unless arms control-related issues have become tied with fundamental security and foreign policy questions, such as the nature of the Islamic Republic's relations with the outside world.

During the period under review in the present study, thus, Iran's arms control decision-making has pronouncedly been an intra-elite affair. Irrespective of the "golden age" of the presidency of Muhammad Khatami (Amuzegar 2004) – that is, the time period of 1997–1999 characterized by an unprecedently open societal debate in Iran –, issues related to arms control have essentially been insulated from extra-elite domestic pressures. Even the reformist members of the Iranian political elite, who have called for more freedoms for the Iranian people and for transparent decision-making procedures, have by and large shown little willingness to subject issues concerning national security to public scrunity (Roshandel 2002: 57).

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[65] Even in democratic societies, where the general public has the possibility to influence national foreign and security policy decision-making, the great majority of the people are ignorant about or disinterested in international affairs, let alone in the narrow and often technical issue area of arms control (Hill 2003: 262–264 and Morrow 1991: 246–247).

[66] For an opposite claim, made by two representatives of the Iranian foreign ministry, suggesting that Iranian NGO – together with the country's press, universities, and the general public – influence the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions, see Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 515). It should be noted, however, that the few Iranian NGO dealing with arms control – mainly loose groupings whose members consist of veterans of the Iran–Iraq war and of Iranian academics and scientists – echo the government's argumentation and are often harnessed to support the Islamic Republic's official diplomacy. For a discussion of the role of NGO in Middle Eastern countries in general, see Halliday (2005: 235–236).

2.4.2 Regime fragmentation: political factionalism

Though more or less closed from extra-elite domestic influences, Iran's political elite itself has been internally divided and its members have constantly competed against each other for political power. The division of the Islamic Republic's ruling class into various factions has resulted from conflicting interests within the regime clergy and from differing views among the elite about the nature of Iran's Islamic state and the content of the country's domestic and foreign policies. The political factions in the Islamic Republic have consisted of various alliances, often centered around influential clerics, that have joined their hands to form larger blocs. To justify and advance their positions in intra-elite power struggles, the factions have based their argumentation on four main types of ideological sources: the words and actions of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranian constitution, Islamic jurisprudence, and the views of other Islamic thinkers and activists (Moslem 2002: 4–5, 96–99).[67]

The factional rivalries between the members of Iran's ruling class have penetrated all areas of state decision-making, also the deliberations on the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies – arms control included.[68] As a result of regime fragmentation caused by factional divisions, which have manifested themselves not only in conflicting views about the objectives of Iranian state policies but also in disagreements over how those objectives should be pursued, Islamic Iran's activities in the area of foreign and security policy have not infrequently lacked clarity and consistency and thereby

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[67] For studies demonstrating how the ideological debates that have taken place in the Islamic Republic within the ruling Islamic discourse have included a component of ideological pluralism, see, for example, Schirazi (1997) who exposes the contradictions between what he calls the Iranian constitution's Islamic legalist and non-Islamic secular elements and between its democratic and anti-democratic elements, and Brumberg (2001) who shows how the oscillating nature of Ayatollah Khomeini's political thinking, together with his desire to accommodate the Iranian clergy's competing visions of the Islamic government, paved the way for a fierce factional rivalry over Khomeini's ideological legacy after his death in 1989. Together, the studies by Schirazi and Brumberg testify to the fact that competing notions over the nature and role of the Iranian state have become an established part of the Islamic Republic's ideological and political landscape. Moslem (2002: 2) goes so far as arguing that ever since the death of Khomeini, the ideological discord among the Islamic Republic's political elite has become the most salient feature of Iranian politics.

[68] As recognized by one Iranian arms control official: "There is no doubt that factionalism influences arms control decision-making in our country" (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [A] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002). According to Ehteshami (2004: 183), political factionalism affects every aspect of public policy in the Islamic Republic and its impact on foreign policy cannot be overemphasized.

conveyed contradictory messages both to the domestic audience and to the outside world.[69]

Because of the centrality of political factionalism in the Islamic Republic's decision-making processes, the identification of the factional blocs, their positions on individual issues, and the power configuration between them at any one given time has been an integral part of the efforts to analyze and understand Iranian state behaviour under the Islamic Republic. Yet the fluidity of the factional boundaries has sometimes made such efforts a formidable task. For example, there have been many instances where individuals from different political factions have adopted identical positions on one issue while fiercely opposed each other in connection with another.[70] The substantive fluidity apart, the factional boundaries have been blurred by the Iranian elite members' eagerness to use factional alignments as a tool in their struggles over political power. Resultantly, tactical reasons, not genuine shifts in attitudes or beliefs, have in many cases explained their factional affiliations.

Yet, at the end of the day, there have been enough similarities or differences – whether in terms of ideological positions or political, economic, and other interests – between the members of the Iranian elite to divide them into various factions and to make the identification of such political blocs possible. The first divisions among the regime clergy began to surface in the early 1980s, soon after Ayatollah Khomeini and his disciples had managed to consolidate their position as Iran's new ruling class by suppressing and eliminating their post-revolutionary domestic rivals.[71] Already in September 1983, Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic's president at the time, publicly admitted that ideological conflicts had become a feature of the political interactions taking place within the country's ruling elite (Moslem 2002: 67–68).

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[69] A factor further contributing to the phenomenon of mixed signals and messages has been the fact that Iranian factions have regularly used foreign policy issues to strengthen their domestic power position either by discrediting the foreign policy views of their rivals or by referring to the positive bearings of their own foreign policy behaviour on Iran.

[70] Note, for example, Kemp's (2001: ix) observation that "some of the staunchest critics of Iran's participation in international arms control regimes have moderate reformist perspectives on domestic politics."

[71] Among those who had to ultimately acknowledge the dominant position of Khomeini and his followers in post-Pahlavi Iran were the members of the Iranian clergy who belonged to a religious society known as the Hujjatiyya. The members of the Hujjatiya opposed Khomeini's political thinking, above all, by calling for a collective leadership of the religious community and for minor clerical involvement in politics. The power struggle between the supporters of Khomeini and the Hujjatiya was, in many ways, a precursor to the factional fighting that subsequently became one of the hallmarks of the Islamic Republic's political life. For a discussion of the Hujjatiya and its disagreements with Khomeini and his disciples, see Menashri (1990: 220–225, 268–271) and Ehteshami (1995: 8–9).

During the reign of Khomeini, the factional disputes in Iran centered to a large extent around economic issues. The so-called Islamic leftists among the Iranian elite called for a strict state control over the economy and for egalitarian economic policies that would focus on and improve the lot of the poor segments of the Iranian population. The so-called Islamic traditionalists or conservatives among the regime clergy, in turn, opposed such policies by referring to the sanctity of private property and by arguing that the Islamic Republic's economic system should be subjected only to minor regulation measures by the government. (Ibid.: 47, 104–107 and Buchta 2000: 11–12)

The views of the Islamic leftists and conservatives differed in regard to other issue areas as well. As far as social and cultural issues were concerned, the conservatives were in support of strict enforcement of the Islamic law in the socio-cultural sphere, whereas the leftits called for a more tolerant approach. These respective positions reflected the Iranian factions' broader views about the role of Islamic law in the Iranian society. In the conservative thinking, the Koran and the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad provided a sufficient legal basis for the Islamic jurists to govern the religious community. The conservatives' traditional reading of the Islamic law contradicted with the Islamic leftists' dynamic interpretation calling for Islamic jurisprudence that takes into account the changing needs of the society and, therefore, goes beyond the traditional sources of Islamic law. (Moslem 2002: 47–50 and Behrooz 1991: 598)

In the course of the Islamic Republic's first decade, issues related to foreign policy largely escaped the factional fighting that was creating divisions among the regime clergy. This was the case especially during the period of 1981–1984 when the overtly ideological foreign policy pursued by the Islamic Republic was being broadly supported by the members of the Iranian elite. Factional fighting in the area of foreign policy was further dampened by the Iran–Iraq war of 1980–1988 which united the ranks of Iran's ruling class and dominated the country's foreign policy agenda. (Behrooz 1990: 20–23 and 1991: 597–598)

In the end, however, the war experience itself came to contribute to the fact that foreign policy became one of the key issues that has divided the regime clergy ever since. For one thing, the needs and vicissitudes of war necessitated pragmatic policies that strengthened the hand of those within the Iranian elite who had doubts over the advantages of a foreign policy line monopolized by ideological considerations. For another, and more importantly, the war revealed to Iran's leaders that the survival of the

Islamic regime could depend on their willingness to distance themselves from a confrontational, ideology-driven approach to foreign affairs.

The first signs of intra-elite tensions over the degree of ideological militancy in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy came to light in the mid-1980s as the Iranian leadership sought to respond to war-time setbacks on military and diplomatic fronts by moderating its foreign policy.[72] By the end of the decade, disputes over the country's foreign policy had become a fixture of intra-elite deliberations and led to the reconfiguration of the Islamic Republic's factional map.

From the viewpoint of the Islamic leftists, the shift towards pragmatism and the increased emphasis on Iran's national interest[73] in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy constituted a blow to the ideals of the revolution. As supporters of an ideological, uncompromising foreign policy orientation, the Islamic leftists had opposed the Iranian government's decision, announced on 18 July 1988, to accept the UN Security Council resolution 598 that established a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. Believing that the Islamic Republic could and should have continued the war against Iraq, the Islamic leftists' post-war argumentation focused on restating their case for a foreign policy line that would confront the great powers, particularly the United States, and their imperialistic policies, seek to export the Iranian revolution by any means beyond the country's borders, and support the victims of what they saw as the great powers' hegemonistic policies in the Islamic world and elsewhere. (Behrooz 1991: 610; Ehteshami 1995: 8, 23 and Moslem 2002: 61, 124)

The representatives of the regime clergy's conservative faction shared a number of the Islamic leftists' foreign policy stances. Like their leftist counterparts, for example, the conservatives were highly critical of the great powers, and especially the United States, were determined to prevent the encroachment of Western influences – whether political, economic, or cultural – into Iran, and believed that the Iranians should defend and help their brethren in the Islamic world. In addition, some members of the conservative faction remained committed to the idea of the export of the revolution. (Buchta 2000: 14 and Menashri 2001: 60)

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[72] For statements made by Iran's leaders in 1984 to justify a more pragmatic foreign policy course, see Behrooz (1990: 23) and Ramazani (1990a: 60).

[73] It is worth noting here that Iran analysts too seldomly point to the fact that official definitions of Iran's national interest have always included elements that have been peculiar to the interests of the ruling Iranian regime at a given point of time. In the Iranian context, thus, the interests of the regime have hardly ever been fully identical with those of the nation, which, following Haas (1986: 726), can be defined as a

Still, in the main, the conservative members of the Iranian elite took a cautious approach to foreign affairs and preferred pragmatism over foreign policy adventurism. Having supported and contributed to the pragmatic shift in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy during the war years, the conservatives spoke for the continuation of the pragmatic course in the post-war era. Well aware of the national imperative of post-war reconstruction, the conservatives recognized that their country had to improve its relations with the outside world and allow at least limited foreign economic participation in its reconstruction efforts. The safeguarding of the revolution's achievements, together with the consolidation of the Islamic regime's domestic position, took priority in the conservatives' foreign policy thinking. (Moslem 2002: 108, 110–111 and Buchta 2000: 12)

Advocating a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs, Iran's conservatives lent their support to the post-war foreign policy efforts of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani – who was elected president in July 1989 and was in charge of the execution of the reconstruction policies – and his allies. Already during the 1980s the conservatives and those within the Iranian elite who adhered to Rafsanjani's political views had jointly spoken for foreign policy pragmatism and ultimately pushed through the changes in Iran's war-time orientation.[74] (Moslem 2002: 48, 93)

By the end of the 1980s, Rafsanjani and his allies had formed an independent political faction and came to be known as the moderates or pragmatists of the Iranian elite. As the president of the Islamic Republic and the leader of the pragmatists, Rafsanjani sought not only to reconstruct the war-torn country but also to strengthen the Islamic regime's legitimacy by transforming Iran into a socially and economically modern state. In order to realize these goals, he and his pragmatist supporters advocated a foreign policy course that would distance itself from ideological objectives and focus on Iran's national interests. This policy of expediency, the pragmatists argued, required a conciliatory foreign policy approach that would seek to improve Iran's relations with the outside world, including governments whom the Islamic Republic had confronted in the past. The pragmatists also pointed out that the reintegration of their country into the

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"socially mobilized body of individuals, believing themselves to be united by some set of characteristics that differentiate them (in their own minds) from outsiders, striving to create or maintain their own state."

[74] As far as questions related to domestic affairs were concerned, however, the views of Rafsanjani and his allies had often been closer to those of the Islamic leftists than to those of the conservatives. For example, Rafsanjani and his allies had objected to the conservatives' calls for strict implementation of Islamic law in the socio-cultural sphere and backed many of the Islamic leftists' initiatives that had emphasized the state's central role in economic activities. (Behrooz 1991: 607 and Moslem 2002: 48)

international community would entail an acceptance of foreign involvement and investment in the development and modernization of the Iranian economy. (Buchta 2000: 16–17; Menashri 2001: 57 and Ehteshami 1995: 138–139, 145)

The election of the Islamic leftist Muhammad Khatami as the Islamic Republic's fifth president in May 1997 brought about yet another major change in the factional constellation within the Iranian elite. While the earlier division between the Islamic leftists, pragmatists, and conservatives continued to capture the fundamental nature of the political disagreements within Iran's ruling class, the alignment of the Islamic leftists and pragmatists behind the new political movement represented by president Khatami gave birth to a new factional coalition known as the reformists.[75] The reformists, broadly supported by various segments of the Iranian population,[76] competed with the regime clergy's conservative faction which itself began to show signs of dividing into two sub-factions: the so-called pragmatic conservatives and the so-called ideological conservatives (Chubin 2006: 32).[77]

The starting point for the Khatami-led reformists' political argumentation was the recognition of the Iranian people's mounting frustration at Iran's poor economic situation and at the lack of political and socio-cultural freedoms in the country. In order to save the revolution, Khatami and his supporters maintained, the Islamic Republic had to review its policies and pursue reforms in all areas of societal life. As far as Iran's political system was concerned, the reformists called for political pluralism within the Islamic framework, questioned the central role Iran's supreme leader played in the

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[75] By the time of Khatami's election as the Iranian president, the Iranian elite's pragmatists were generally called the 'modern right' faction. This designation, referring to the pragmatists' approach to socio-cultural and economic issues, was used to separate them from the conservatives, comprising what now became known as the 'traditional right.' The changes that occurred in the Iranian society and intellectual life in the post-war period, together with the Islamic leftists' political marginalization during the Rafsanjani years, and the developments that took place in the international system in the post-Cold War era, all fed into the process of major ideological transformation that Iran's Islamic leftists underwent during the first half of the 1990s. In spite of the Islamic leftists' disapproval of many of the Rafsanjani administration's policies, the dramatic moderation of their political opinions and their dislike of the traditional right made them an ally of the modern right whose positions on socio-cultural, economic, and, to a lesser degree, foreign policy issues, in turn, had drawn increasing criticism from conservative circles. For the changes in Iran's factional landscape in the post-Khomeini period and for the developments explaining those changes, see Ansari (2000) and Moslem (2002).

[76] Muhammad Khatami's backers in the 1997 presidential elections included a diverse range of groups formed by students, women, pro-democracy activists, human rights advocates, private entrepreneurs, as well as people from the poor strata of the Iranian society (Amuzegar 2004). The Iranian people's strong support for president Khatami and the reformist movement illustrated, as noted by Chubin (2002: 90), that the division between the Islamic Republic's reformists and conservatives was not merely a factional configuration but also a reflection of a popular divide within the Iranian society.

[77] Pollack and Takeyh (2005) speak of the conservative bloc as consisting of "conservative realists" and "conservative ideologues," whereas Moslem (2002) treats the latter as an independent, "neo-fundamentalist" faction.

Islamic Republic's power configuration, and emphasized the importance of popular participation in domestic politics. Similarly, the reformists called for more freedoms for the people in the socio-cultural sphere and stressed that political reforms, accompanied by the rule of law, were a prerequisite for Iran's economic development.[78]

Like his predecessor, president Khatami made a close connection between the Islamic Republic's foreign policy and its economic objectives, and argued that only a non-confrontational foreign policy course stripped of hostile revolutionary aspirations could further Iran's economic interests. In contrary to Rafsanjani, however, Khatami believed that Iran's reintegration into the international community would not succeed unless the Islamic Republic focused on dealing with the mistrust and misunderstandings that continued to overshadow its relations with the outside world. Khatami's concept of "dialogue among civilizations" was the crystallization of this premise and a catchword for the Khatami administration's foreign policy which aimed to develop good relations with all countries, including the United States, and to convince the world of the Islamic Republic's peaceful intentions and respect for international norms. (Ehteshami 2002: 302; Ansari 2000: 116–117 and 130–133 Menashri 2001: 82–83)

To Iranian conservatives, the reformist agenda posed a direct challenge to their vested interests and ideological premises. In the first place, the reformists' calls for tolerance and pluralism in the domestic political arena threatened the conservatives' hold on key state institutions and conflicted with their conception of the Iranian political system. By the same token, the conservatives objected to the reformist goal of socio-cultural liberalization by maintaining that increased freedoms would subject the Iranian society to Western cultural influences and thereby undermine its Islamic values. The ideological conservatives, in particular, were worried about what they regarded as the erosion of revolutionary zeal and growing immorality in Iran. (Gasiorowski 2000)

The conservative opposition to the reformist agenda comprised economic issues as well. Iran's pragmatic conservatives saw the reformist plans to develop an industrialized national economy based on economic diversification, decentralization, and pluralism as a danger not only to their own economic interests but also to those of their political supporters, among others, in the country's revolutionary foundations and within the

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[78] The priority attached by Khatami and his supporters on political reform thus marked a departure from what Ansari (2000: 58) describes as the Rafsanjani administration's effort to "demobilize politics and society following the war, and to rationalize them in the service of economic reform." For detailed discussions of the reformists' views on socio-cultural, political, and economic issues, see Ansari (2000) and Moslem (2002).

bazaari class. The ideological conservatives, on the other hand, objected to the reformists' economic programs on the grounds that they ignored the core ideals of the revolution – such as austerity and economic justice – and would only widen the gap between rich and poor Iranians. (Ansari 2000: 116, 168–175 and Moslem 2002: 104–107, 134–137)

In the area of foreign policy, the conservative criticism of the reformists centered around the argument that the reformist emphasis on pragmatism and national interest went too far. Whereas the pragmatic conservatives referred to Iran's role as the defender of Islamic values and the world's Muslims, alluded to the perceived threats posed by the West, and criticized the reformists' readiness to negotiate and establish diplomatic relations with the United States, the ideological conservatives regarded the reformists' foreign policy approach as an outright renouncement of the revolution's international objectives. According to the ideological conservatives, the self-designated vanguard of the Iranian revolution, the Islamic Republic should return to a dogmatic foreign policy orientation that would promote its revolutionary message, actively resist the policies of the United States and other Western powers, and confront Israel as well as morally corrupt Arab regimes. (Menashri 2001: 71, 83–84, 177 and Pollack and Takeyh 2005)

2.4.3 Regime fragmentation: bureaucratic pressures

Without still having tried to actually identify them, our discussion of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy decision-makers so far has produced two general conclusions. First, it has been argued that extra-elite domestic actors have played an insignificant role in Iranian arms control decision-making. Secondly, it has been pointed out that the unity and coherence of Iran's decision-making elite itself has been persistently undermined by political factionalism.

In order to understand the domestic political pressures under which arms control decision-making in Islamic Iran takes place, however, the discussion of the divisions among the Islamic Republic's regime clergy have to be complemented with an examination of the bureaucratic demands that affect Iranian arms control decisions. While simultaneously both victims and indirect participants of the Iranian elite's factional competition, the Islamic Republic's bureaucratic operatives have interests that are specific to the organizations and agencies they represent and which they seek to promote in connection with policy debates on foreign and security affairs.

In most cases, the interests of the individual parts of national bureaucracies are related to their capacity to fulfill their operational mandates. In other words, government agencies seek to advance their own views in order to make sure that a policy problem and the decisions regarding it will not limit their ability to perform their organizational tasks. Government agencies' positions on individual issues – whether dealing with the content, the objectives, or the means of policy, or with all of them – may also stem from their effort to increase their influence and prestige within the national bureaucracy. In such instances, the personal self-interest of individuals belonging to the bureaucratic elite may play an additional role. Finally, government agencies may try to influence national decision-makers because they genuinely believe, as expert organizations responsible for specific aspects of state affairs, that their view of what is best for the country is important and perhaps even the best one available. (Destler 1991: 183, 188–189 and Hill 2003: 85)

Due to the nature of arms control as a multi-faceted issue area, there are usually a number of government agencies that are involved in the formulation and execution of national responses to arms control questions.[79] Given that each of these agencies has the tendency to approach such questions from the perspective of their own duties and expertise, a conflict of bureaucratic positions on individual issues often takes place. This has also been the case in Iran. The country's foreign and defence ministries, for example, have held differing views on whether the Islamic Republic should join international arms control instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (Partrick 2002: 4). Similarly, the diplomatic arm wrestling, since 2002, between Iran and the international community over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program has revealed divisions within the Iranian bureaucracy.[80]

The diversity of bureaucratic opinion about the content, objectives, and means of national arms control operations has meant that bureaucratic politics, bargaining

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[79] Normally, national responses to arms control problems do not consist of a single decision, but are composed of a string of decisions that involve different parts of the national bureaucracy (Hermann 2001: 54).

[80] Hasan Ruhani, the Islamic Republic's chief nuclear negotiator between 2003–2005, for example, has recollected how, in 2003, the AEOI and the Iranian foreign ministry made conflicting conclusions about the seriousness of the diplomatic dispute over Iran's nuclear program. Whereas the former argued that the matter could be quickly settled within the IAEA, the latter held a far more pessimistic view and issued a strong warning that Iran might not be able to solve the problem that easily. (Ruhani 2005: 3–4)

between government agencies on arms control-related issues,[81] has been an intrinsic component of arms control decision-making in the Islamic Republic. The main players in Iran's arms control-related bureaucratic politics have been the country's foreign ministry, defence ministry, armed forces, and the AEOI. As for the foreign ministry, Iran's principal diplomatic actor, it has had a vested interest in supporting Iranian participation in international arms control talks and arrangements. The shift from dogmatism towards increased pragmatism in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, and the concomitant extension of Iran's diplomatic contacts, has strengthened the foreign ministry's status in the national bureaucracy and emphasized its role as an agency that is uniquely positioned to evaluate the positive and negative implications of Iran's arms control operations for its diplomatic relations.

In a similar manner, the Iranian military authorities' opinions about arms control have reflected specific institutional interests. Like their counterparts in most other countries, the representatives of the Islamic Republic's military establishment have had strong reservations about arms control.[82] In the first place, they have feared that arms control weakens their ability to perform their duties. Whereas Iran's regular military has been worried about the effects of arms control on national security planning, the assessments of arms control by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), the revolutionary arm of the Islamic Republic's armed forces, have also included considerations related to regime security.[83]

The fear for personnel cutbacks in military organizations and defence industries has traditionally been another central concern that has explained skepticism towards arms control among those who look after the interests of national military establishments. In the Iranian context, it seems clear that the Islamic Republic's defence ministry has tried

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[81] Destler (1991: 182) defines bureaucratic politics as "the process by which people inside government bargain with one another on complex public policy questions."

[82] As noted by one Iranian arms control official: "Yes, it is true that our defence forces are not enthusiastic about arms control. But this is the case in other countries as well" (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [C] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

[83] For a comparison of the Iranian regular military's and the IRGC's respective agendas and roles in the context of a set of foreign and defence policy questions, see Byman et al. (2001: 53–97). For a comprehensive discussion of the IRGC, which sees itself as the prime defender of the Iranian revolution and the country's Islamic regime, see Katzman (1993). There are very few instances where the Iranian military leaders' explicit reservations about arms control have come to public attention. The most oft-cited example of a leaked statement in recent times has been that of Yahya Rahim-Safavi, the commander of the IRGC, who, in April 1998, in a closed-door speech to IRGC officers, reportedly posed the following rhetorical questions to his colleagues: "Can we withstand America's threats and domineering attitude with a policy of détente? Can we foil dangers coming from America through dialogue of civilizations? Will we be able to protect the Islamic Republic from international Zionism by signing conventions banning the proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons?" (cited in Farhi 2001: 35–36).

to see to it that Iran's arms control operations do not adversely affect the domestic production of conventional weapons, the management of which belongs to the ministry's responsibilities. In the same way, it is very likely that the IRCG – which oversees the Islamic Republic's missile manufacturing projects as well as, it is widely believed, Iran's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs – has made major efforts to ensure that its weapons production activities will not be disturbed by national arms control commitments. In addition, and as is often the case within military establishments, Iran's armed forces probably view arms control as a threat to their prestige in the society and to their internal morale (Sheehan 1988: 94).

Considerations regarding institutional strength and status have driven the bureaucratic behaviour of the AEOI, too, albeit in a limited area of arms control. In addition to having sought to defend its role as a central player in the area of nuclear diplomacy,[84] the AEOI has tried to ensure that the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions do not obstruct the execution of Iran's nuclear program. Since 2002, in the course of the diplomatic crisis over the Iranian nuclear program, for example, the AEOI has been critical of diplomatic initiatives that have envisioned limitations to the roll-out of Iran's nuclear plans. AEOI representatives have justified their opposition by referring to the financial and time-related costs of such limitations and by pointing out that the slowing down or the suspension of Iran's nuclear efforts would have negative implications for both the retention and employment of scientific personnel and for the AEOI staff's self-esteem (Chubin 2006: 37, 40–41).

Aside from the foreign ministry, the Islamic Republic's military establishment, and the AEOI, there have been a number of other government agencies whose representatives have taken part in Iranian arms control deliberations, and, thanks to their expertise, also acted as members of Iran's diplomatic delegations at international arms control meetings. The officials of the Islamic Republic's intelligence ministry, for example, have regularly warned Iranian decision-makers of the possibility that foreign powers try to use international arms control agreements' verification clauses as a cover

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[84] The AEOI has – until the intensification of the crisis over Iran's nuclear program in 2003 at least – possessed a great deal of political and technical autonomy in its dealings with the IAEA, both in Vienna, where the IAEA headquarters are located, and in connection with IAEA inspections inside Iran. Therefore, and naturally also because of its position as the national expert organization in nuclear matters, the AEOI has played a central bureaucratic role in the overall planning of the Islamic Republic's operations in the area of nuclear arms control. (Ruhani 2005: 3–4 and Balouji 2005: 90)

for espionage activities.[85] Intelligence concerns have also characterized the arms control argumentation of the representatives of Iran's chemical, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology industries. Yet more than worrying about commercial secrets and confidential data, the industry representatives seem to have supported the Islamic Republic's participation in international arms control agreements, for such participation has been viewed as an avenue to gaining access, through treaty clauses that call for inter-state cooperation, to latest technological and scientific innovations. As the subsequent chapters of this study will demonstrate, corresponding considerations pertaining to technological and scientific information have led Iranian health and agriculture authorities to support Islamic Iran's participation in international arms control arrangements.

2.4.4 The locus of decision-making power

Foreign and security policy decision-making in Islamic Iran has often been depicted as a complex and even chaotic process that involves a large number of competing actors and where decisions are frequently reached informally, outside the formal structures of government.[86] Despite the important role that informal networks and non-governmental actors play in Iranian decision-making, however, it is still the Islamic Republic's official leaders, those members of Iran's political elite who occupy key positions in the country's formal power structure, that constitute the central site of actorness when it comes to foreign and security policy decision-making.

This conclusion is supported, first of all, by the fact that the leaders of the Islamic Republic have been major players in the informal Iranian networks that have tried to influence the country's official policies on the basis of their economic, ideological, and social power.[87] Accordingly, state authorities have not merely functioned as channels for extra-governmental influence, but also held major leverage over the informal actors themselves. Key Iranian officials' centrality in the Islamic Republic's power configuration is further highlighted by the eagerness with which influential Iranian

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[85] Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), established in 1984, employs some 30,000 people and is perhaps the largest intelligence service in the Middle East. For a discussion of the MOIS and the Islamic Republic's other intelligence agencies, see Buchta (2000: 164–170).

[86] See, for example, the discussion in Buchta (2000: 6–10); Byman et al. (2001: xii, 21–23) and Samii (2006: 64–66).

[87] Note here, for example, that the Islamic Republic's supreme leader is the instance to whom Iran's highly powerful revolutionary foundations are answerable.

personalities have tried to secure positions in the country's formal decision-making system.[88] While in some cases the efforts to obtain official positions have been motivated by attempts to institutionalize and legitimize informal power, in the majority of cases such striving has been based on the recognition that only a formal insider position in the political system can translate into actual decision-making influence, especially in such limited areas of state policy as arms control.

All this means that control over official state institutions, whose tasks and powers are outlined in Iran's constitution of 1979, has constituted the main route for influence for the Iranian forces – whether political factions, bureaucratic actors, or extra-governmental interest groups – hoping to be part of formulating the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies.[89] That the struggle over decision-making influence has primarily taken place within the official institutional framework also means that even though the involvement of informal actors in foreign and security policy decision-making prevents outside observers from fully understanding the mechanisms of the Iranian decision-making system, an analysis focusing on top government functionaries nevertheless enables us, first, to single out the individuals who have crucially influenced the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions during the various stages of the Islamic Republic's history, and, secondly, to identify the main characteristics of the Iranian decision-making process in the area arms control.

2.4.4.1 Key decision-makers: the Khomeini years (1979–1989)

In the aftermath of Iran's 1979 revolution, arms control played a two-fold role on the new Iranian regime's political agenda. On the one hand, arms control was among the Iranian leaders' immediate priorities. Domestically, the most urgent task was to get hold of the weaponry that had found its way into the hands of the Iranian population during

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[88] The political aspirations of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, Iran's president from 1989 to 1997, have been a case in point. After his two-term presidency, Rafsanjani continued to chair the Islamic Republic's Expediency Council, and in 2000 he ran, unsuccessfully, for a seat in the Iranian parliament. In 2005, Rafsanjani was defeated by Mahmud Ahmadinizhad in the second round of the Iranian presidential election. Yet a year later, in December 2006, Rafsanjani managed to obtain a seat, and the chairmanship, of the Islamic Republic's Assembly of Experts, a council of popularly elected clerics that appoints Iran's supreme leader. Theoretically at least, the Assembly of Experts also has the power to remove the reigning supreme leader from his post should he be found unable to carry out his responsibilities.

[89] It should be noted that the Iranian state organs' competition over the boundaries of authority and the Iranian elite members' personal rivalries often get mixed into the overall political battle over institutional power.

the political turmoil leading to the revolution.[90] In the realm of foreign policy, one of the first major steps taken by the new Iranian government, as later discussed in chapter three, was to cancel the Shah's orders of sophisticated conventional weapons from Western suppliers.

On the other hand, however, as a distinct area of diplomatic activity, arms control fell more or less into oblivion. Given that post-revolutionary Iran's powerholders were fully occupied with domestic issues and with questions concerning the broad contours of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, the conduct of Iranian arms control diplomacy and supposedly also the decisions on the details of Iran's arms control operations were largely left to the bureaucrats of the foreign ministry, a group now including recruits of the old and the new Iranian regime.[91] Still, the Iranian arms control officials' freedom of diplomatic manoeuvre was strictly limited in the sense that their actions had to be consistent with the revolution's ideological dogma which consisted of Islamic, anti-Shah, and Third Worldist elements. Only when the revolutionary ideology was of no help, did the Iranian officials rely on the other principal – intellectual and practical – guidelines: on the stances Iran had adopted during the Pahlavi years and on like-minded governments' arms control operations.

Yet following the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq war and the successful monopolization of political power in post-Pahlavi Iran by Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters, the transition period in Iran's arms control policy started to come to an end. The Islamic Republic's arms control operations began to take their distinctive form and transformed from a reactive type of state activity into proactive diplomacy. This period also saw the formation of decision-making structures that stayed in place for the Islamic Republic's first decade. Put differently, the members of Islamic Iran's political elite who played a crucial role in the country's arms control decisions, together with the institutional locus of such decisions, started to become identifiable.

By far the most important decision-maker in the Islamic Republic during its first decade was Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini's power based, above all, on his status as the leader and architect of the Iranian revolution and on his charismatic religious

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[90] Following the establishment of the provisional Iranian government on 5 February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini and Mihdi Bazargan, the head of the provisional government, repeatedly appealed to the Iranian people to return such arms to the government (Menashri 1990: 78).

[91] Cottam (1990: 9–10) describes the situation as follows: "In the domain of foreign policy strategy, as elsewhere, the lack of central direction was apparent. Individual ambassadors and other officials felt free on many occasions to act in the name of Iran and often could generate some institutional support for their endeavors."

authority. His unrivaled position in Iran was also formally cemented, for as the holder of the highest political office in post-revolutionary Iran's political system, itself built on Khomeini's theory of Islamic government,[92] he had, and reserved for himself, the last word on all important decisions dealing with both domestic and foreign affairs.[93]

While intimately involved in setting the general guidelines for the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies, it is not clear to what extent Khomeini participated in the formulation of the steps Iran took in the area of arms control under his rule.[94] What seems clear, however, is that major effort was made to ensure that the Islamic Republic's arms control operations were consistent with the supreme leader's foreign and security policy preferences.[95] When not directly expressed by Khomeini himself, the wishes of the supreme leader were relayed to state functionaries by Khomeini's private office and by his personal representatives placed in all government agencies, including the Islamic Republic's armed forces. The staff of Khomeini's office and the supreme leader's representatives also observed that those wishes were actually followed.[96]

To perform the tasks of communication and control on his behalf, Khomeini also had two representatives, a political and a military figure, in the Supreme Defence Council (SDC), the body responsible for the planning and formulation of Iran's military and defence policies. It was supposedly the SDC – which directed Iran's war efforts and hence acted as the country's "super-cabinet" during the Iran–Iraq conflict (Chubin and Tripp 1988: 249)[97] – where the critical decisions on the Islamic's Republic's arms control operations were also made. In addition to Khomeini's representatives, the SDC

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[92] For a discussion of Khomeini's theory of Islamic goverment, which rests on the notion of the rule of the jurisprudent or *vilayat-i faqih*, see Brumberg (2001: 80–97).

[93] Article 110 of the Iranian constitution of 1979 granted Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's supreme leader, the formal power to decide on Iran's general policies and to supervise their execution.

[94] Iran observers' conclusions about Khomeini's focus on the details of Iranian state policies are conflicting. Schirazi (1997: 68, 83), for example, suggests that Khomeini was closely involved in tactical decision-making as well, whereas Katzman (1993: 131) is among those taking the opposite view.

[95] As noted by Schirazi (1997: 62): "There were [...] cases in which it appeared that Khomeini was not the initiator of a particular decision taken by those close to him but only subsequently gave his approval. Most of the time, however, these were actions for which Khomeini had long since provided the inspiration and concerning which his wishes were perfectly clear to the actual initiators."

[96] Due to their direct link to Khomeini himself, the supreme leader's personal representatives often inspired government officials with outright fear (Schirazi 1997: 73). Even after the Khomeini era, the personal representatives of the supreme leader have retained their status as highly influential operatives in the Iranian political scene. According to Buchta (2000: 48), they are "more powerful than ministers and other government functionaries, and they have the authority to intervene in any matter of state."

[97] The SDC maintained a large secretariat whose staff members were posted to operational area and field headquarters of the Iranian armed forces to monitor the senior field commanders' military and political loyalty to the civilian leadership. These representatives of the SDC even had the power to overrule some of the field commanders' decisions. (Schahgaldian 1987: 30, 147)

was composed of the following Iranian authorities: the president, the prime minister, the minister of defence, the chief of the joint staff of the armed forces, and the commander of the IRGC (Schirazi 1997: 13).[98]

Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, the speaker of the Iranian parliament and Khomeini's political representative in the SDC, is often mentioned as the council's most influential member and, as such, as the number two foreign and security policy decision-maker in Khomeini's Iran. Rafsanjani played a key role in the planning and execution of the Islamic Republic's war policies and even occupied, during the final weeks of the Iran–Iraq war, the post of acting commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces.[99] In addition to his participation in the running of the war, Rafsanjani wielded major influence on decisions that concerned other issues with significant foreign and security policy ramifications, such as Iran's nuclear program. (Menashri 1990: 382; Ehteshami 1995: 168–169 and Etemad 1987: 215–216)

Apart from the supreme leader and Rafsanjani, the core of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy leadership under Khomeini presumably consisted of Ali Khamenei, Iran's president, and Mir-Husain Musavi, the country's prime minister. As the acting commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces and as the chairman of the SDC, president Khamenei exerted major influence on decisions dealing with foreign and security affairs. However, Khamenei's relative power was undermined by the Islamic Republic's constitution which divided the country's executive branch between the president and the prime minister. Resultantly, prime minister Musavi, who was engaged in a fierce political battle with Khamenei over the boundaries of executive authority, was able to feed his views into the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy decision-making.[100] Ultimately, however, Khamenei emerged as a more powerful foreign and security policy operative in Khomeini's Iran.[101] (Ehteshami 1995: 168; Buchta 2000: 22 and Menashri 1990: 263–264, 305, 345)

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[98] Apart from the SDC's core members, whose membership in the council was prescribed by the Iranian constitution, other high-ranking representatives of the Iranian government – including the interior and foreign ministers as well the minister of the IRGC – and the Islamic Republic's armed forces also attended the meetings of the SDC on a more or less regular basis (ibid.: 28–29).

[99] According to Iran's 1979 constitution, the supreme leader acts as the commander-in-chief of all Iranian armed forces. During the Iran–Iraq war, however, Khomeini delegated this position to the holder of the Iranian presidency and later to Rafsanjani.

[100] The power struggle between Khamenei and Musavi is said to have benefited Rafsanjani, himself in competition with Khamenei, because it strengthened the image of Rafsanjani as being above political quarrelling and unassociated with the policy failures of the executive branch (Menashri 1990: 352).

[101] For example, three key ministers of the Musavi cabinet – oil, interior, and foreign affairs – were loyal to Khamenei and did not cooperate with the prime minister. Musavi is reported to have complained to

2.4.4.2 Key decision-makers: the Rafsanjani presidency (1989–1997)

The end of the Iran–Iraq war in the summer of 1988 and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini a year later posed a dual challenge for the Islamic Republic's decision-making system. On the one hand, Iran's political elite had to streamline its decision-making procedures in order to increase the post-war reconstruction policies' prospect for success. On the other hand, the elite was faced with the fundamental dilemma of how to secure social stability and leadership continuity in the wake of the death of their charismatic leader. One of the end results of the elite responses to these challenges was the elevation of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and Ali Khamenei, already key players in Khomeini's Iran, to the very core of political power in the Islamic Republic.[102]

Elected as Iran's president in July 1989, Rafsanjani became the symbol of the country's post-war reconstruction efforts. Iran's economic rehabilitation and modernization in mind, Rafsanjani advocated a diplomatic course that sought to end the Islamic Republic's international isolation and to improve Iran's relations with the outside world. Rafsanjani's task was facilitated by the changes made in Iran's constitution in 1989 which abolished the office of prime minister from the political scene and made the president the sole holder of executive authority. Relying on his constitutional powers and on the informal power base he had created during the war years, Rafsanjani became a key decision-maker in post-Khomeini Iran.

Of course, Rafsanjani had to share his power with Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor as Iran's supreme leader. While the position of the supreme leader remained the most important office in the Iranian political system, Khamenei's modest religious credentials posed a problem to his and to the whole regime's credibility.[103] As a

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Khomeini that decisions on foreign policy had been made without his knowledge. (Ibid.: 345, 351 and Behrooz 1990: 28)

[102] The quick rise of Rafsanjani and Khamenei to top leadership positions in Iran in the course of the 1980s was significantly expedited by the fates of their senior elite comrades. In particular, the deaths by assassination of Ayatollah Bihishti in June 1981 and president Muhammad Ali Rajai and prime minister Muhammad Javad Bahunar in August 1981, as well as the political downfall of Ayatollah Muntaziri, who had already been nominated as Khomeini's successor, improved Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's political fortunes. For a discussion of Muntaziri's nomination as the supreme leader-designate, see Menashri (1990: 347–350), and for an analysis of the reasons leading to Muntaziri's subsequent downfall, see Behrooz (1991: 609–610). Although one of the most influential members of the Iranian political elite during the Islamic Republic's first decade, Muntaziri seems not to have played a central role in foreign and security policy decision-making.

[103] Given that none of Khomeini's closest political confidants had possessed the religious credentials required from a person filling the post of the supreme leader, as speficied in the 1979 constitution, Iran's political elite amended the constitution in 1989 to the effect that future holders of the office of the supreme leader would no longer need to necessarily be leading authorities in religion. What now counted

consequence, Khamenei – a cleric who held only a mid-level theological rank and who, following his appointment as the supreme leader, expediently started to be addressed by the high-ranking title of ayatollah[104] by Iran's political establishment – spent his first years as the new leader trying to strengthen his personal and religious authority.[105] This gave Rafsanjani more room for political action, even if the effective constellation of dual leadership in place in the aftermath of Khomeini's death fuelled the power competition between the two leading members of the Iranian political elite and their respective allies.

By the time of the start of Rafsanjani's second term as president in 1993, the power struggle between him and Ayatollah Khamenei had shifted to the latter's advantage. In spite of the setbacks Khamenei had experienced in boosting his religious credentials and authority, he had nonetheless consolidated his political power and emerged as Iran's dominant decision-maker. Yet, at the same time, the relationship between Rafsanjani and Khamenei was coloured not only by competition and disagreements but also by continued cooperation in many areas of state policy, foreign and security affairs included. Both leaders recognized that the interests of the country and those of the Islamic regime necessitated cooperation between the two of them. (Buchta 2000: 25; Menashri 2001: 63–64 and Ehteshami and Hinnebusch 1997: 26)

Some analysts characterize the collaboration between Khamenei and Rafsanjani as having been based on a more or less fixed division of labor between the two leaders. Such characterizations usually put the president at the helm of foreign affairs and the supreme leader, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, in charge of military matters.[106] While providing a rough picture of the two leaders' priorities in the sphere of foreign and security policy, however, this perspective most likely undervalues Rafsanjani's influence in defence-related matters and, conversely, Khamenei's role in

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most was the leader candidate's social and political achievements. Hence, the official Iranian justifications of the selection of Khamenei as Khomeini's successor focused above all on his political services to the Islamic Republic.

[104] For a discussion of the various titles and the theological hierarchy of the Iranian clergy, see Buchta (2000: 54).

[105] For a discussion of these efforts of Khamenei, see Gieling (1997) and Menashri (2001: 13–32).

[106] See, for example, Chubin and Tripp (1996: 50) who speak of Rafsanjani's control of the government and of Khamenei's control over the religious and revolutionary domain. Menashri (2001: 63–64), in turn, points to an informal division of labor in which Rafsanjani led Iran's economic and diplomatic pursuits and the supreme leader the country's cultural policies and relations with Islamist movements around the world. In yet another analysis, which treats the economic interests of Iran's elite as the driving force of Iranian state policies, Ansari (2006: 273) refers to a division of labor where the political forces led by Rafsanjani (in Ansari's conceptualization, the mercantile bourgeoisie) "provided the money" and those headed by Khamenei (the Islamic authoritarians) "the religious justification."

steering Islamic Iran's diplomatic course.[107] If correct, this conclusion suggests that Rafsanjani and Khamenei were both intimately involved in the major national decisions made on arms control – a domain of state activity located at the crossroads of foreign and security policy – between 1989–1997, during the Rafsanjani presidency.[108] By the same token, the conclusion about the top Iranian leaders' dual participation in foreign and security policy decision-making implies that the offices of the president and the supreme leader and their respective staff members played a central role in devising and directing Iran's arms control operations.

Often, however, it is the Islamic Republic's Supreme National Security Council that is said to have acted as the main venue for the formulation of guidelines for Iran's arms control policy.[109] The SNSC was created as a result of the constitutional amendments of 1989 and it was charged with three sets of responsibilities explicitly spelled out in article 176 of the amended constitution: (a) determining the defence and national security policies of Iran within the framework of the general policies laid down by the supreme leader; (b) coordinating political, intelligence, social, cultural, and economic activities in relation to general defence and security policies; and (c) exploiting the Islamic Republic's material and non-material resources for facing internal and external threats.[110]

Accordingly, the SNSC has functioned as a key forum for the high-ranking members of Iran's foreign and security policy establishment to air their views on topical issues and to influence the content of national policies. As such, then, the SNSC has played an important unifying role in getting the relevant Iranian players behind individual decisions and in promoting the sense of solidarity within the Islamic Republic's political elite. Under the amended Iranian constitution, the SNSC, which is headed by Iran's president, is composed of the following Iranian authorities: (a) the heads of the

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[107] Note, for example, Chubin's (2002: 78–79) later reference to Rafsanjani as the Iranian official with the most to say about WMD and issues related to military strategy, as someone easily displacing "Khamenei and others in the number and depth of his statements on these issues." On the other hand, note Schirazi's (1997: 79) observation of Khamenei's insistence on determining Iranian foreign policies.

[108] Cf. Menashri's (2001: 64) general conclusion about Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's collaboration in decision-making: "It appears that these two leading revolutionary figures often discussed critical, and perhaps less critical, issues before making decisions."

[109] The Iranian officials interviewed for this study, for example, pointed, without exception, to the central role of the SNSC in Iran's arms control decision-making.

[110] In the light of the emphasis laid on security issues by Iran's leadership, it follows from the SNSC's mandate, as pointed out by Schirazi (1997: 97), that, in theory, the council can define almost any event or issue as security relevant. In this sense, the SNSC may – much in the same fashion as its predecessor, the SDC, did during the Iran–Iraq war period – function as a supergovernment ignoring the Iranian state institutions' formal division of authority as defined in the country's constitution.

executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; (b) the head of the joint chiefs of staff of the Iranian armed forces; (c) the head of the country's Plan and Budget Organization; (d) two representatives nominated by the supreme leader; (e) the ministers of the interior, intelligence, and foreign affairs; (f) the individual minister holding authority over the question being dealt with in the council; and, finally, (g) the highest ranking officers of the regular military and the IRGC.

The SNSC makes its decisions through balloting, and the issues discussed in the council are normally brought before it either by the president or the supreme leader (Nourbakhsh 2005: 3). The decisions of the SNSC themselves become effective only after they have been accepted by the supreme leader. After such confirmation, the decisions taken by the SNSC will be forwarded to relevant bureaucratic agencies for implementation. These same agencies, including those dealing with arms control matters, serve the SNSC also by preparing issues for discussion and decision-making in the council.[111] The SNSC's own secretariat and the council's sub-committees, which are specifically referred to in the amended constitution and which are presided over by the president or a SNSC member appointed by the president, significantly contribute to the preparatory process as well.

Although the SNSC has become an integral part of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy machinery, it seems that during the Rafsanjani presidency, the dual leadership of Rafsanjani and Khamenei, the council acted more as a forum for intra-elite debate than as an actual locus of arms control decision-making. This assumption is supported by the fact that as the head of the SNSC, and above all, as a powerful holder of executive authority in the Islamic Republic, Rafsanjani exerted major personal influence on the council's activities.[112] On the other hand, Ayatollah Khamenei, without whose ratifications the decisions of the SNSC would have had little relevance in the first place, used his personal representatives in the council not only as source of information about the council's activities but also as a channel to communicate his views to the members of the SNSC. Seen from this angle, then, the SNSC gave its seal to decisions on the Islamic Republic's arms control operations rather than actually made them.

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[111] Author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[112] According to Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (1997: 33), the SNSC was effectively controlled by the president and his staff.

2.4.4.3 Key decision-makers: the Khatami presidency (1997–2003)

The election of Muhammad Khatami as the Iranian president in May 1997 introduced a new element into the Islamic Republic's decision-making scene. Khatami, a relatively unknown member of the Islamic Republic's political elite, enjoyed broad support among the Iranian people and was able to use this support and his newly-won presidential powers to promote a political agenda that envisioned major reforms in the Iranian society. Presenting himself as an alternative to the regime elite's old guard, president Khatami became a national decision-maker to be reckoned with.

Though distancing himself from many of the policies of his predecessor, Khatami shared ex-president Rafsanjani's goal of improving the Islamic Republic's international image and relations by the means of constructive diplomacy. And like Rafsanjani, the new Iranian president viewed arms control as playing an important role in this general diplomatic effort. The major improvent in Iran's relations with its Arab neighbours forming the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), perhaps the Khatami administration's most significant foreign policy achievement, for example, included an arms control element.

As far as arms control decision-making was concerned, the Khatami government's emphasis on open discussion and transparency made Iranian elite debates more public than ever before. It is no accident that the unprecedented openness by which elite deliberations on issues such as Iran's participation in the CWC, the Indian–Pakistani nuclear weapon tests of 1998, or the diplomatic crisis over the Islamic Republic's own nuclear program were conducted coincided with the Khatami presidency.[113]

And still, in the end, Khatami's actual influence on Iran's arms control policy remained limited, mostly pertaining to the management of the Islamic Republic's standard diplomatic operations and to the implementation of strategic decisions made elsewhere. The way in which the Islamic Republic handeled the diplomatic crisis over Iran's nuclear program during Khatami's presidency was the most evident manifestation of the powerlessness of the president, and the state institutions which he held authority

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[113] In his assessment of Khatami's impact on Iran's foreign and security policies, Chubin (2002: 34) notes that Khatami also managed to create a political atmosphere where Iranian security debates became less alarmist and less obsessed with military aspects of security.

over, to play a central role in decision-making that dealt with the strategic direction of Iran's arms control operations.[114]

In fact, the nuclear case is illustrative of the general evolution of Khatami's political standing in Iran during his presidential term. After the early successes of the Khatami presidency, coloured by popular optimism and Iranian reformists' political determination, the reformist agenda and its proponents became a target of conservative Iranian forces' political, and in some cases physical, counterattack that effectively thwarted Khatami's attempts at reform.[115] The conservative response was led, or at least approved, by the Islamic Republic's supreme leader who wanted to ensure that the reformist trend in Iranian politics would not pose a threat to Iranian conservatives', and to his personal, power and political objectives.[116]

Hence, it was Ayatollah Khamenei that remained the ultimate decision-maker in Islamic Iran under the Khatami presidency.[117] Relying on the staff of the supreme leader's private office as well as on his personal representatives posted to all important state institutions, including those dealing with arms control matters, Khamenei exercised control over the various power centers in Iran and informed them of his views

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[114] That president Khatami and his government were sidelined from the core decision-making processes related to the nuclear issue has been openly admitted by the members of the president's administration (Takeyh and Gvosdev 2004: 34). Although Khatami himself was closely involved in hastening the pace of Iran's nuclear projects after his election as president (Samii 2006: 79), Nourbakhsh (2005: 7) argues that the president was most probably kept uninformed about certain aspects of the nuclear program. Whether this could have been possible or not, it seems clear that most members of the Islamic Republic's bureaucratic elite have been unknowledgeable about the actual content of the Iranian nuclear program. A high-ranking Iranian arms control official interviewed for this study, for example, admitted in 2002, just before the international uproar over Iran's nuclear efforts erupted, that his country might be trying to build a nuclear bomb under the cover of a peaceful nuclear program and active arms control diplomacy (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [C] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002). This statement is in direct contradiction with Farhi's (2004: 34) research which "could not find a single person, among the hardliners, reformists or even opposition leaders, who thought that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons program."

[115] Already in 2000, three years after the start of his presidency, Khatami himself publicly admitted to being unable to realize his political goals by declaring that he does "not have sufficient powers to implement the [Iranian] constitution" (cited in Amuzegar 2004). Two years later, in October 2002, he resignedly stated the following: "As the president I may not agree with many issues, but I can only act within the framework of the law and my powers, and do not have the right to interfere in other branches of government" (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 October 2002).

[116] Apart from the Iranian conservatives' resistance to the changes called for by Khatami and his allies, the Khatami-led reformist movement's failure resulted from Khatami's weak leadership and from the reformists' unwillingness to make full use of their popular support to push through their political programs. For a comprehensive discussion of the successes of the Khatami presidency, the conservative counterattack against the Islamic Republic's reformists, and the reformists' own political mistakes, see Ansari (2006).

[117] Khatami himself pointed to Khamenei's supremacy by noting that in the Islamic Republic, "the general direction of policies is determined by the leader, and all state organs are obliged to move in line with these policies" (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 October 2002).

on domestic issues and foreign affairs.[118] As the commander-in-chief of the Islamic Republic's armed forces, Ayatollah Khamenei continued to hold authority over the composition of those forces and Iran's military policies. And although president Khatami managed to leave a mark in Iranian diplomacy, no major foreign policy decision in the country was made without the supreme leader's direct or indirect participation.[119]

Whereas Ayatollah Khamenei managed, during the Khatami presidency, to fortify his position as Iran's decision-maker par excellence, the same period saw the decline of the political fortunes of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, the ex-president. Without the formal powers stemming from the office of the presidency, Rafsanjani was not able to exert the same influence on state matters as before. Nevertheless, as one of the Iranian regime's key figures and as somebody extremely well versed in the details of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies, he supposedly managed to retain a central role in the decision-making processes related to these areas of state activity.

That Rafsanjani remained at the center of Iran's decision-making scene resulted not only from the broad informal influence he continued to exert in Iran – whether through his personal prestige, financial holdings, or his extensive network that reached all important power circles in the Iranian society –, but also from the fact that Ayatollah Khamenei secured the ex-president a pivotal formal position in Iran's political system. By expanding the composition of the Islamic Republic's so-called Expediency Council (EC) and extending Rafsanjani's chairmanship of that organ some two months before the May 1997 presidential election, the supreme leader ensured that the former president would also have an official institutional platform for his interventions in national decision-making.[120] (Menashri 2001: 92; Samii 2006: 76–77 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 5)

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[118] At the time of Muhammad Khatami's first presidential term, some 600 people were estimated to be working directly within the supreme leader's private office or in the branches feeding into it. The total number of the supreme leader's personal representatives – including both those operating inside Iran and outside the country, for example, in Iranian cultural centers – was put at some 2,000. It should be noted that the status of the supreme leader's personal representatives has never been legally defined in the Iranian constitution. Khamenei simply inherited the representative system from Ayatollah Khomeini. (Buchta 2000: 46–49 and Schirazi 1997: 74)

[119] For example, it was the supreme leader and not the president, the chairman of the SNSC, who wielded actual control over that body (Menashri 2001: 65).

[120] Rafsanjani had presided over the EC already during his own presidency. As the head of the executive branch, thus, he had simultaneously presided over the institution capable of vetoing the decisions of the legislative branch. At the time of Rafsanjani's presidency, the council had selected its own chairman. In March 1997, it was Khamenei who confirmed that Rafsanjani would maintain his position as the head of the EC. (Nourbakhsh 2005: 4)

The EC had been established by Ayatollah Khomeini in early 1988 as a response to the persistent struggle over law-making authority between Iran's parliament and the so-called Guardian Council (GC), a body that possesses the right to veto the laws passed by the parliament if it considers them incompatible with Islamic law or the Iranian constitution. In order to break constant impasses that had resulted from the inability of the Majlis and the GC to agree on national legislation, Khomeini had declared that if the interest of the Islamic state so requires, the state has the right to disregard Islamic ordinances in legislation. Thus in Khomeini's opinion, the maintenance of the Islamic state or rule was the most important religious ordinance and, as such, the guiding principle of legislation. Soon after publicizing his view, Khomeini had formed the EC and charged it with the task of resolving legislative deadlocks between the Majlis and the GC by authoratively assessing the interest of the state in individual conflict situations.[121] (Schirazi 1997: 64 and Behrooz 1991: 604)

Beside the function as the ultimate arbiter of disputes arising between the two Iranian legislative bodies, the EC, whose formal institutional status was anchored in articles 110 and 112 of the Iranian constitution in 1989, has the responsibility to advise Iran's supreme leader in matters that pertain to the delineation of the country's general policies, as well as to consider any issue forwarded to it by the supreme leader. It was this advisory component of the EC's responsibilities that Ayatollah Khamenei had primarily in mind when he expanded the composition of the EC in March 1997 and hence increased the council's relevance in Iran's political scene.[122] While up to that time Khamenei had practically ignored the EC when making decisions on the general policies of the Islamic Republic,[123] now the supreme leader saw the council as a useful tool in controlling the political ambitions of Rafsanjani's presidential successor. (Menashri 2001: 92; Buchta 2000: 61 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 4–5)

As the head of the expanded EC, Rafsanjani did not hesitate to use the council to bolster his personal influence and to obstruct the policies of the Khatami administration in the legislative and executive fields. Rafsanjani – who, together with his political

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[121] In solving such cases, the EC, which makes its decisions by a majority vote, has the freedom to take one of three possible steps: either to agree with the position of the Majlis or with that of the GC, or to adopt a wholly independent position in a matter (Behrooz 1991: 605 and Schirazi 1997: 95).

[122] The EC, whose members are appointed by the supreme leader, came to include 25 permanent members, all well-known representatives of the Iranian elite. Politically, the line-up of the expanded EC corresponded with Ayatollah Khamenei's conservative preferences, a factor that subsequently made the council a conservative bastion against the Iranian reformists. (Menashri 2001: 93 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 5)

protégés, had broken the pragmatist faction's alliance with the reformists in late 1998 and aligned with the pragmatist wing of the conservative faction – sought to involve the EC in all major policy debates and ultimately managed to turn the council into an actor that often exercised considerable influence in national decision-making.[124] (Buchta 2000: 63, 150; Ehteshami 2004: 182 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 5)

2.4.4.4 The bureaucratic elite

The discussion of Islamic Iran's key decision-makers so far has suggested that although the inner workings of the country's decision-making system remain in many respects unknown to outside observers, it is still possible to identify the members of the Iranian elite who supposedly have had the biggest influence on the Islamic Republic's arms control policy. Below the central decision-makers identified above, however, there is another group of Iranian authorities who have closely participated in the country's arms control operations. These second-tier members of the Iranian elite, referred to here as the representatives of the Islamic Republic's bureaucratic elite, have sought to influence national arms control decision-making in order to promote the interests of the state agencies they have been linked to.[125]

In their efforts to leave a mark in the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions, the members of Iran's bureaucratic elite have exploited their position as operatives who have control over unique information and whose expertise is crucial for the formulation and execution of national arms control operations. The channels through which the bureaucratic elite has sought to influence Iranian arms control decisions have been both formal and informal. But even if informal avenues – such as familial, religious, or educational contacts – have played an important part in the Iranian bureaucracy's

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[123] According to Nourbakhsh (2005: 5), many Iranians were not even aware of the EC before Rafsanjani's chairmanship of the council during Khatami's presidency.

[124] One symbolic illustration of Rafsanjani's continued role as a key Iranian decision-maker was the fact that as the chairman of the EC, he kept on meeting every high-ranking foreign dignitary visiting Iran (Nourbakhsh 2005: 5).

[125] It is important to note that, between Islamic Iran's key foreign and security policy decision-makers and the country's bureaucratic elite, there lies a group of highly powerful regime representatives whose influence in the Iranian society has levelled with that of the core Iranian decision-makers and certainly outranked that of Iran's bureaucratic elite. Yet, it is extremely difficult to say what actual role these regime figures – including the above-mentioned Ayatollah Muntaziri and other influential individuals such as Ayatollahs Ardibili, Mishkini, Yazdi, Jannati, or Vaiz-Tabasi – have played in the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy decisions during the 1979–2003 period. The general hypothesis put forward here is that the role played by these 'grey area' actors has been indirect and not central from the perspective of the present study.

foreign and security policy networking (Byman et al. 2001: 25–28), it is nonetheless the formal state institutions that seem to have been the main target of the bureaucratic elite's arms control lobbying.

As the Islamic Republic's main diplomatic actor, Iran's foreign ministry has been intimately involved in the country's arms control operations. Consequently, the holder of the post of foreign minister has been one of the key bureaucratic players in Iran's arms control decision-making. This was the case especially with Ali Akbar Vilayati who served as the Islamic Republic's foreign minister from 1981 to 1997. Vilayati, who was appointed to his post at the wish of Ayatollah Khomeini in December 1981, played an important part not only in developing and executing Iran's arms control operations, but also in changing the course of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy from an ideologically positioned orientation towards an increasingly pragmatic one. Vilayati's close ties to Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and particularly to Ayatollah Khamenei significantly contributed to his successes as a bureaucratic actor. (Schirazi 1997: 72; Behrooz 1990: 23 and Ehteshami and Hinnebusch 1997: 35)

Yet, it was his close association with Khamenei and the Iranian elite's conservative forces that also brought Vilayati's tenure as foreign minister to an end. As a result of Vilayati's conservative outlook and his explicit support for Ali Akbar Natiq-Nuri, the conservative candidate, in the 1997 presidential election, Muhammad Khatami replaced the long-time foreign minister with Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's then envoy to the UN. Despite his impeccable credentials as a member of Iran's political elite and as an experienced foreign policy operative, however, Kharrazi's influence in Iranian politics never reached that of his predecessor. Although an important executor of Khatami's foreign policy agenda, Kharrazi had to ultimately recognize that his political stature decreased along with the growing political impotence of the reformist president.

Naturally, Iran's armed forces have also been keen on presenting and promoting their views on arms control. Thanks to its role as the defender of the Iranian revolution and the country's Islamic regime, the IRGC has had an easy access to the highest echelons of political power in Iran.[126] Muhsin Rizai, the commander of the IRGC from 1981 to

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[126] Between 1982–1989, the IRGC even had its own ministry that helped the revolutionary guards in logistical matters, arms procurement, and in the running of administrative – such as financial, legal, and personnel – tasks. Although the leaders of the IRGC considered the ministry a valuable channel to influence Iran's political decision-makers, they simultaneously viewed the ministry as a tool of the civilian leadership to control the affairs of the IRGC. Accordingly, the IRGC commanders did not seem especially disappointed at the political leadership's decision in 1989 to abolish the IRGC ministry. It was

1997, has been the most influential military official in the Islamic Republic and, hence, presumably the most important military player in Iran's arms control decision-making.[127] Another military official who has most probably exerted major influence on the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions is Ali Shamkhani.[128] Before becoming Iran's defence minister in 1997, Shamkhani had acted, among others, as Rizai's deputy and as the commander of the IRGC's ground and naval forces. As for Iran's regular military, it has had much less influence on the Islamic Republic's arms control decision-making than the IRGC. But as the Iranian leadership's trust in the political loyalty of the regular military has increased over the years, the regular military has managed to strengthen its relative position in the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy deliberations (Byman et al. 2001: xii).

Apart from the Iranian foreign ministry and armed forces, the bureaucratic players who have wanted to have a say in the Islamic Republic's arms control decision-making have mainly come from the AEOI and Iran's ministry of intelligence. Riza Amrullahi, the long-time head of the AEOI, and his successor Ghulamriza Aghazadih have been the two key advocates of the Iranian nuclear establishment's interests in national arms control debates. Amrullahi played a central role in presenting and implementing post-revolutionary Iran's nuclear policies at the IAEA during the Islamic Republic's first two decades, whereas Aghazadih, former oil minister who was appointed to his post by president Khatami in 1997, took over the AEOI at a time when Iran was not only accelerating its nuclear efforts but also becoming a source of increasing concern for the international arms control community.

The chiefs of the Islamic Republic's intelligence ministry, too, have actively participated in Iranian security deliberations. Given that the intelligence ministry is charged with the task of defending the regime against internal and external subversion,

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combined that year with the regular military's defence ministry into a Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics. (Katzman 1993: 101–103)

[127] Ayatollah Khamenei dismissed Rizai from his position as the IRGC commander in September 1997 after strong pressure from president Khatami who had been highly critical of Rizai's interference in politics and his open conservative sympathies. Some analysts suggest that Khatami's disapproval of Rizai offered the supreme leader a good opportunity to replace the long-time IRGC commander with a less powerful and politically ambitious personality. Rizai was succeeded by Yahya Rahim-Safavi, another central IRGC figure, who shared his predecessor's hardline views and sought to influence the content of Iranian arms control decisions during the Khatami presidency. (Buchta 2000: 124–125 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 10–11)

[128] According to Chubin (2006: 39), for example, Shamkhani was among the small group of Iranian decision-makers – alongside with Ayatollah Khamenei, Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, Muhammad Khatami, and Hasan Ruhani, the secretary of the SNSC – that made the strategic decisions with regard to the handling of the diplomatic crisis over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

the Iranian elite has attached great value to what the ministry has had to say about arms control-related matters. Ali Yunisi, who served as the intelligence minister of president Khatami's cabinet since 1999, for example, was one of the key ministerial-level operatives taking part in the planning of Iran's dealings with the IAEA during the diplomatic crisis over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. Similarly, Ali Fallahian, Yunisi's long-time predecessor, as well as Muhammad Muhammadi-Rayshahri, post-revolutionary Iran's first intelligence minister, in particular, have been influential players in the country's political scene.[129]

During the Islamic Republic's first decade, the members of Iran's bureaucratic elite sought to promote their interests, first of all, by presenting their views to Ayatollah Khomeini, to his key advisers in the office of the supreme leader, and to Khomeini's personal representatives placed in various state bodies. Given Khomeini's practically unlimited powers in post-revolutionary Iran, his approval of a bureaucratic viewpoint contributed not only to a bureaucratic agency's ability to influence policy but also to its status in the intra-governmental power constellation. The SDC was another key channel through which bureaucratic actors were able to present and promote their views on foreign and security policy matters. And of course, the executive branch discussions and decision-makers were the basic targets of bureaucratic lobbying.

During the post-Khomeini era, the formal avenues available to the bureaucratic elite to influence debate on foreign and security affairs remained essentially the same – even if the relative importance of the various centers of decision-making power, as discussed earlier, varied to some extent throughout the 1989–2003 period. The emergence of the SNSC and the Rafsanjani-led EC as arenas for foreign and security policy deliberations constituted the most visible new element in the Islamic Republic's decision-making system. Especially the SNSC became an important venue for the Iranian elite to exchange views on issues such as arms control. That Hasan Ruhani, the long-time secretary of the SNSC and Ayatollah Khamenei's political representative in the council, rose to become one of Islamic Iran's most influential foreign and security policy operatives testifies to the SNSC's central position in the Iranian decision-making structure. Another sign of the council's centrality is the fact that it was the SNSC, and

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[129] Akhavi (1987: 183), for example, names Rayshahri as one of the most important members of Iran's political elite during the Islamic Republic's first decade. Other regime dignitaries mentioned in Akhavi's nine-member list include Ayatollahs Khomeini and Muntaziri, Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, Ali Khamenei, and Mir-Husain Musavi. In a more recent assessment, Buchta (2000: 9) lists Rayshahri, a member of the EC, among the nine most influential members of the Islamic Republic's political elite.

not the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry, that was authorized by the supreme leader, in 2003, to lead Iran's diplomatic activities in the crisis over its nuclear program.[130]

Often, as a result of their position in Iran's political elite, high-ranking representatives of the Islamic Republic's bureaucratic establishment have been nominated to serve in the very same state bodies which have possessed decision-making power in arms control matters and acted as targets of bureaucratic lobbying.[131] A good example of a former member of the bureaucratic elite himself becoming a target of such lobbying is Ali Akbar Vilayati, who, following his dismissal as foreign minister, was appointed as Ayatollah Khamenei's advisor for foreign affairs.[132] This role as a key functionary of the supreme leader's office not only offered Vilayati an opportunity to directly influence Ayatollah Khamenei's foreign policy thinking but also put him in at the center of Iranian foreign policy-making.[133] Vilayati, who also functioned a member of the EC, is said to have played an influential role in the activities of the EC by heading the council's committee for political and security affairs (Buchta 2000: 63–64).[134]

As far as the Iranian bureaucratic agencies' relative influence on the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions is concerned, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to exactly say what role each Iranian agency has played in the handling of the individual arms control issues discussed in the present study. Generally speaking, however, it would seem that the Iranian armed forces and the IRGC, in particular, has been the most influential bureaucratic actor in the Islamic Republic's arms control deliberations. Due

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[130] The SNSC secretary Ruhani, who was named Iran's chief negotiator in the nuclear issue, was reportedly involved in making decisions on both the strategic and the tactical aspects of the country's response to the nuclear crisis. Ruhani, who was also a representative of the EC, is said to have been one of the few members of the Iranian political elite closely associated with decisions on core foreign and security policy questions in post-Khomeini Iran. (Chubin 2006: 38–39 and 2002: 38 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 3, 7)

[131] More seldomly, some members of the bureaucratic establishment have occupied a dual role in the sense that they have held an interest group position and simultaneously been members of a state organ with decision-making powers. Note, for example, the membership of Ghulamriza Aghazadih, the head of the AEOI, in the EC or the role of Hasan Firuzabadi, the head of the joint chiefs of staff of the Iranian armed forces, as Ayatollah Khamenei's special advisor on military affairs and as a member of the EC (Buchta 2000: 47, 62).

[132] According to Buchta (2000: 47), the supreme leader's office employs altogether ten special advisers focusing on different areas of state policy.

[133] As the supreme leader's advisor, Vilayati took part, for example, in formulating Iran's diplomatic course in the crisis over its nuclear program. Both in this task and more generally, Vilayati did not hesitate to undermine the position and authority of Kamal Kharrazi, president Khatami's foreign minister. (Chubin 2006: 39; Ehteshami 2002: 293 and Nourbakhsh 2005: 2)

[134] The history of the Islamic Republic knows plenty of other cases where a bureaucratic actor has turned into an operative representing a body with decision-making powers. Muhsin Rizai, for example, was appointed as the secretary of the EC soon after he had lost his commander position in the IRCG. Even after his dismissal, Rizai presumably remained one of the most influential security policy players in Iran. (Buchta 2000: 71 and Chubin 2002: 38)

to the priority the Iranian regime gives to security issues, the leaders of the Islamic Republic have supposedly listened more to the IRGC's arms control views than to those of other bureuacratic agencies. The IRGC's influence in the bureaucratic bargaining process has stemmed not only from its expertise and links to the Islamic Republic's top leadership, but also from its status as the ultimate defender of the revolution as well as from its institutional power. Due to the power the IRGC holds in the Iranian society, Iran's key decision-makers have been forced to listen to the IRGC commanders' views merely to keep them satisfied with national policies.

At the same time, however, the IRGC has presumably never been able to dictate the content, objectives, or means of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations. Like other bureaucratic actors, it has had to sell its views to Iran's key decision-makers and to try to convince the political leadership of the superiority of its approaches to individual arms control questions. This task has supposedly been easier when arms control issues have become topical at times of crisis or when they have touched the Islamic Republic's core security interests. The farther the issues on Iran's arms control agenda have been from crisis situations and from the Islamic Republic's vital interests, thus, the greater the role of other bureaucratic players in Iranian arms control decision-making has been. Similarly, it can be assumed that the increased pragmatism in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy has reduced the IRGC's relative influence in the country's arms control-related bureaucratic bargaining.

The phenomenon of bureaucratic politics is often considered an obstacle to optimal, rational state decision-making.[135] In other words, the process of bureaucratic competition and bargaining is seen as leading to compromise decisions that are reflective of bureaucratic balances of power at any one given time rather than geared to maximize national interest. When it comes to the case of Islamic Iran, however, it is not clear whether the negative view of bureaucratic politics is warranted. The existence of multiple state institutions that constantly test the boundaries of their authority and the division of the Islamic Republic's elite into various political factions mean that bureaucratic influences on Iranian arms control decision-making need not necessarily be only negative. On the contrary, they may very well inject an element of dispassion, competence, and continuity to Iran's otherwise turbulent decision-making system and hence improve the quality of the country's arms control decisions.

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[135] For a discussion of three theoretical models of foreign policy decision-making – the rational actor, the political, and the psychological model –, see Webber and Smith (2002: 51–62).

2.4.5 The consensus principle

As discussed above, the fragmentation of the Iranian regime along factional lines and the Iranian bureaucratic agencies' institutional interests have created a situation where various competing elite actors have constantly sought to leave a mark in the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy decisions. Although the ultimate decision-making power in Iran's foreign and security affairs has been in the hands of a small group of powerful regime representatives, these individuals have often taken the multiple elite voices into account in their decisions. Consensus-building has thus been a distinctive feature of the Iranian decision-making process.[136]

Iranian leaders' readiness to compromise and to take part in political horse-trading in order to secure the Iranian political elite's more or less explicit support for their decisions has stemmed from two main considerations. First, consensus has been seen as a way of ensuring that intra-elite disagreements do not paralyze the management of the Islamic Republic's foreign relations and its security affairs. By trying to produce decisions that are broadly supported by the members of the country's elite, Iran's leaders have sought to increase the likelihood that their decisions will not be undermined in the implementation phase. Secondly, and more generally, Iranian leaders' efforts at consensus-building have been reflective of their goal of maintaining the unity of the country's Islamic regime. Because of their fear that disagreements within the regime play into the hands of its domestic and foreign opponents, Iran's leaders have tried to ensure that their decisions do not create major divisions within the country's elite.[137] (Byman et al. 2001: 22; Hermann 1990: 14 and Hagan 1987: 344)

There are a number of factors that have facilitated consensus-building in the Iranian context. The shared view that Iran should be ruled by clerics and on the basis of religious principles has constituted the fundamental prerequisite for intra-elite

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[136] The Iranian arms control officials interviewed for this study all referred to the importance of consensus-building in the Islamic Republic's arms control decision-making. Also see Byman et al. (2001: xii–xiii, 21–22).

[137] Concern over the unity of the Islamic regime has been a recurrent theme, among others, in the argumentation of the Iranian supreme leaders who have regarded themselves as mediators remaining above the elite's political infighting. Whereas Ayatollah Khomeini's role as a guide or final arbiter was widely recognized by the members of the Iranian elite, Khomeini's successor Ayatollah Khamenei has had difficulties in winning similar kind of respect from his elite peers. Khamenei's more or less open identification with the Iranian regime clergy's conservative forces – itself a result of Khamenei's attempts to improve his political and religious standing – has weakened the authority of the institution of the supreme leader (Schirazi 1997: 78; Menashri 2001: 41 and Moslem 2002: 37).

agreements on Iranian state affairs. The elite members' common interest in maintaining the clerical regime and in formulating policies that are believed to be in line with Islam have not only limited the range of various viewpoints within the regime, but also contributed to the elite members' acceptance of each other as legitimate political actors as well as to their acceptance of the rules of the Islamic Republic's political life.

That the Iranian regime members' mutual disagreements have pertained more to domestic issues than to foreign and security policy questions has been another key factor contributing to intra-elite consensus-building. Especially in the area of security policy the views of the elite have often been identical.[138] Apart from shared ideological premises, this uniformity of views has resulted from shared historical experiences. As a result of such binding experiences as opposition to the Shah prior to the 1979 revolution or the Islamic Republic's war against Iraq in 1980–1988, Iranian elite members' images of the world have closely corresponded with each other.

Common allegiances, beliefs, and experiences notwithstanding, Iranian leaders' efforts at arms control-related consensus-building have been facilitated by the nature of the arms control enterprise itself. Given that the international arms control agenda changes only slowly and that diplomatic deliberations on the various agenda topics can go on for years, even decades, without significant breakthroughs, there has often been no need for Iran to formulate detailed national approaches to individual arms control issues. Under such circumstances, Iran's leaders have been able to make decisions that adopt lowest common denominator positions – agreed upon in fora such as the SNSC or the EC – and thereby satisfy the basic demands of the various factional and bureaucratic actors operating within the regime. By basing Iran's arms control operations on general argumentative principles and expressing their personal stances in broad terms, thus, the leaders of the Islamic Republic have been able to limit intra-elite controversies and to convince various elite actors that their interests have been registered in the decision-making process.

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[138] Chubin (2002: 40–41), for example, concludes that even the security policy viewpoints of Ayatollah Khamenei and the reformist president Muhammad Khatami did not significantly differ from each other. Similarly, the Islamic Republic's representatives themselves have often pointed to the uniformity of the Iranian state officials' foreign and security policy views. As noted, for example, by one Iranian arms control official, the differences of view in the Islamic Republic about the country's arms control policy have concerned more the means of Iranian arms control operations than their content or overall direction (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (A) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002). Moshaver's (2005: 177, 192) study of Islamic Iran's foreign policy goes so far as suggesting that the strong ideological similarities between the Iranian elite members' foreign policy views essentially render the analytical division of the Islamic Republic's political elite into various factions irrelevant.

Yet the Iranian leaders' efforts to associate all elite forces with national arms control decisions have not been without their problems. In the first place, the general way in which Iran's arms control positions have been formulated has allowed various elite operatives to offer conflicting interpretations of the purposes of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations.[139] This has led to mixed signals in Islamic Iran's arms control policy and thereby complicated Iranian arms control officials' efforts to pursue a consistent diplomatic course.[140] Furthermore, Iran's national interests and the quality of its policies have suffered from the consensus principle's propensity to generate decisions that rest more on domestic power calculations than on substantive analysis of the policy problems at hand (Destler 1991: 193, 195).

Apart from discouraging informed policy discussions and long-term policy planning, the search for consensus in Iranian decision-making has also weakened the country's ability to react to diplomatic situations requiring unambiguous and speedy responses. When faced with such situations, Iran's decision-makers have often been forced to open earlier elite agreements and to renegotiate them (Byman et al. 2001: 23). That the application of the consensus principle has resulted in inefficient decision-making processes has been acknowledged by Iran's arms control officials themselves. In the context of the post-2002 diplomatic arm-wrestling over the country's nuclear program, for example, the leaders of the Islamic Republic were reportedly unable, at the outset of the crisis, to brief Iran's bureaucratic functionaries of the details of the country's policy in the matter.[141]

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[139] That Iran's broadly formulated arms control stances have provided various elite operatives with the sense of having made gains in intra-elite policy debates is illustrated, among others, by the fact that although critical of the Khatami administration's moderate views on foreign policy, Iran's conservative forces did not seem to be particularly worried about president Khatami's reformist diplomatic argumentation because, as noted by Eisenstadt (2004: 24), it served a useful purpose by "winning Iran diplomatic points abroad and providing political cover for the activities of the hardliners in the security services and armed forces." According to Gasiorowski (2005) and Chubin (2002: 84), Ayatollah Khamenei allowed the Iranian reformists to realize some of their objectives because he knew that the Iranian people strongly supported the Khatami administration's reformist aspirations. In their analysis, thus, the supreme leader and his allies from the conservative camp essentially used the Iranian reformists as a tool to reduce popular dissatisfaction while simultaneously making sure that the policies of the reformists would not seriously threaten the conservatives' leading position in the Islamic Republic's power configuration.

[140] The attempts by Iran's leaders to get the various sections of the country's elite behind national foreign and security policy decisions have increased the relative influence in the decision-making process of those elite members who have put emphasis on the Islamic Republic's ideological objectives. These ideologically oriented members of the Iranian elite have often managed to set the parameters of intra-elite debates and even to prevent or delay diplomatic operations. (Chubin 1994: 68 and Chubin and Tripp 1996: 51–52)

[141] Ali Salihi, Iran's representative to the IAEA at the time, for example, subsequently complained that he had had major difficulties in getting instructions for diplomatic action from his political masters in Tehran. He attributed these difficulties to the existence of multiple actors within the Iranian leadership

At the end of the day, however, one should not overstate the role of consensus-building in Iranian decision-making. It is more than likely that in critical situations and in matters that have concerned the Islamic Republic's core foreign and security policy interests, Iran's key policy-makers have refrained from consensus-building and effectively insulated arms control decision-making from factional and bureaucratic politics.[142] Of course, the insulation of critical arms control issues from elite deliberations has not prevented Iran's decision-makers from trying to promote the impression that the Islamic Republic's arms control decisions are not only based on the will of the Iranian people but also expressions of extensive intra-elite debates. In a related manner, Iran's arms control officials have not hesitated to try to use the conflicting voices emanating from the country's elite circles as a diplomatic asset in international negotiations. The tactic pursued by the Iranians in such cases has been to warn the other parties of the possibility that a rejection of Iran's diplomatic positions would allow domestic critics in the Islamic Republic to strengthen their influence on the matter and, consequently, force the Iranian representatives to adopt a more uncompromising stance in the future.[143]

References to foreign and security policy disagreements in the Majlis, the Iranian parliament, as well as to the fact that the Majlis can seek to influence national arms control operations through legislative initiatives and through its role as the state body responsible for the ratification of Iran's international treaties, have been one manifestation of this diplomatic tactic. Yet what the Iranian officials have kept quiet about is that, in actuality, Iran's arms control commitments have never been dependent on the views of the Majlis. Given the realities of the Islamic Republic's political life, the Majlis has been more or less sidelined from the arms control decision-making process.[144] Although the Majlis has actively discussed foreign and security policy issues

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and to the secrecy surrounding Iranian decision-making. (Traub 2004). Alluding to Iranian arms control decision-making in general, Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 515), two representatives of the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry, characterize the decision-making process as "complicated and time consuming."

[142] For a similar conclusion, see Chubin (2002: 38); *Iran: Where next on the nuclear standoff?* (2004: 9) and Samii (2006: 64, 74). Generally speaking, there are three basic strategies available for national foreign and security policy decision-makers to deal with domestic opposition in the policy-making process: (a) accommodation (that is, bargaining and controversy avoidance); (b) mobilization (legitimization of the regime and its policies); and (c) insulation (deflecting, suppressing, and overriding opposition) (Hagan 1995: 128–132).

[143] For these same tactical reasons, Iran's leaders have at times actively encouraged dissenting elite voices to come to the fore. By doing so, they have engaged in what Hill (2003: 82) alludes to as the diplomatic game of speaking with competing voices.

[144] Ali Akbar Natiq-Nuri, then speaker of the Majlis, for example, directly admitted in 1992 that the Iranian parliament played only a marginal role in the area of foreign policy (Schirazi 1997: 97). This

and made use of its right to question cabinet ministers on the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies, it has essentially remained a forum for intra-elite debate rather than functioned as an independent actor in the decision-making process.

As noted above, a key purpose of the Iranian leaders' consensus-building efforts has been to ensure that however enthusiastic about a foreign and security policy-related decision, the relevant members of the country's elite still agree to follow a certain course of action. In other words, the aim has been to decrease the possibility that the implementation phase of national decisions, the translation of decisions into political action, brings about discrepancies between intended and observed state behaviour.[145]

As the focus of this work is on the substantive content and objectives of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy and not on the consequences or outcomes of Iran's arms control operations, the implementation aspects of the Iranian policy are beyond the scope of the present study. Generally, however, we can conclude that the implementation of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policy decisions has suffered from at least four kinds of difficulties. First, the agencies and individuals responsible for the execution of national policies have not always carried out the political leadership's decisions in full and have sometimes even actively worked against them. Not even Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's all-powerful leader, was able to obtain absolute obedience from his subordinates. Not infrequently, the competing forces within Iran's bureaucratic machinery sought to interpret Khomeini's orders to their own advantage, manipulated them for their own interests, and even tried to block their execution (Schirazi 1997: 80).[146]

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marginalization has been a source of frustration for the members of the Majlis ever since the Islamic Republic's first decade (Behrooz 1990: 23). The only major occasion when the Majlis could have used its powers to influence Iran's arms control policy was the ratification of the CWC in the summer of 1997. Even if some members of the Majlis opposed the treaty, the factional composition of the parliament was such that the Majlis could not have agreed on a decision against the ratification and hence against the Iranian leadership's long-standing diplomatic efforts in chemical arms control. It should also be pointed out that the Iranian parliaments' attempts to influence the country's foreign and security policies through legislative initiatives have been seriously hampered by the constitutional right of the GC and the EC to torpedo such initiatives.

[145] As pointed out by Hill (2003), "foreign policy actions cannot be understood without an appreciation of their implementation phase, which is at least as important as that of decision-making, given that outcomes are so often markedly different from original intentions."

[146] As far as Iranian state agencies' commitment to the political leadership's foreign and security policy decisions is concerned, the IRGC has most probably been the most problematic actor in this regard. To give an arms control-related example of the IRGC's independent activities, in 1984, during the Iran–Iraq war, the IRGC reportedly violated a UN-brokered moratorium on the shelling of civilian targets in order to undermine the position of Ali Khamenei, Iran's president and the chairman of the SDC at the time (Katzman 1993: 132). Whatever the exact details of this episode, the fact remains that the possibility of the IRGC becoming a law unto itself has been a constant source of concern for the leaders of the Islamic Republic.

Secondly, the implementation of Iranian leadership's foreign and security policy decisions has suffered from the lack of institutional and organizational resources needed to put national decisions into action. This has been the case especially in situations where the political leaders' decisions have rested on unrealistic assessments of the problems in question. Thirdly, the discrepancies between intent and action in Iranian policies have in some cases resulted from political leaders' unclear or vague expressions of the objectives and procedures required for implementation. The lack of a clear division of labour between the bureaucratic agencies dealing with foreign and security policy matters has only complicated such problems. Finally, although the lowest common denominator positions typical of consensus agreements have contributed to successful execution of political orders in Iran, they have occasionally also become an obstacle to the national decisions' consistent implementation. In other words, when a consensus agreement has been questioned and challenged within the elite, the subsequent renegotiations on the issue have changed the parameters of the original implementation process. (Hill 2003: 127; Hermann 1990: 19 and Byman et al. 2001: 21, 23)

In the final analysis, of course, one should note that incongruities between declared and observed state behaviour may also be caused by factors not directly related to the implementation problems mentioned above. In the Iranian case, one such factor has been the existence of extra-governmental actors seeking to promote their own foreign and security policy agendas.[147] Also, there is always the possibility that the discrepancies between the Islamic Republic's officially stated intentions and its actual behaviour are illustrative of a deliberate dual policy. In arms control terms, this would mean that while taking part in international arms control deliberations and seeking to reap the benefits arising from such participation, Iran simultaneously pursues policies that are undermined by the very same efforts it is promoting diplomatically.

Although the problems pertaining to the implementation of the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies have by no means disappeared from the Iranian policy scene, their relative role has presumably decreased in the course of the Islamic Republic's existence. Over time, the leaders of Islamic Iran have managed to strengthen their control over the country's extra-governmental actors, in addition to which the

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[147] The activities of extra-governmental operatives overshadowed Iran's foreign and security policies especially during the Islamic Republic's first decade. Ayatollah Muntaziri's efforts, through his private office, to export Iran's revolution to neighbouring countries was a good example of such unofficial intervention in the foreign and security policy arena (Akhavi 1987: 200 and Behrooz 1991: 610).

Iranian state agencies' commitment to respecting and following their political leaders' foreign and security policy orders has increased. The regime's consolidation, the Iranian leaders' emphasis on elite consensus, and the bureaucratic operatives' fear to challenge their political masters aside, the implementation of national arms control decisions has been facilitated by the fact that arms control issues have only rarely aroused major political passions within the Islamic Republic's political elite.[148]

2.5 Continuity and Change in Iran's Arms Control Policy

One of the objectives of the present work, as noted in the introductory chapter, is to try to tentatively see to what extent the arms control operations of Islamic Iran have been characterized by continuity and change. Aiming to piece the historical evolution of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy together, this study seeks to identify Iran's initial positions on individual arms control issues related to conventional, chemical, biological, and nuclear arms control, and then empirically establish how, if at all, those initial issue positions[149] have changed in the course of the 1979–2003 period under discussion. The focus will be on four distinct aspects of Iran's arms control policy: primarily on the substantive content and objectives of Iranian issue positions, and secondarily on the means and the level of effort of Iran's arms control operations. In addition to tentatively seeking to recognize the elements of continuity and change in Islamic Iran's arms control policy, the present work offers preliminary conclusions about the factors that have led Iran to either initiate change in its arms control activities or to stick to essentially unchanged courses of action.

It is presumable that the Islamic Republic's arms control policy has in some respects undergone constant change during the 1979–2003 period. For example, Iran's armed conflict with Iraq in 1980–1988 forced Iranian officials to calibrate their arms control operations so that they would serve the country's war effort. Also, every now and then, the Islamic Republic has adjusted its approaches to individual arms control issues in order to strengthen its bargaining power vis-à-vis other countries. Finally, one should take into account the fact that, in time, arms control issues themselves have changed in

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[148] This paragraph draws upon Byman et al. (2001: 2, 22, 29); author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (A) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Nourbakhsh (2005: 2).
[149] The term 'initial issue position' is borrowed from Mansbach and Vasquez (1981: 189).

terms of substance, the patterns of behaviour characterizing them, as well as in terms of the cast of international actors interacting over them (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 11).

On the other hand, however, it is important to draw a conceptual distinction between minor and major changes in Islamic Iran's arms control operations. Thus while the Iranian regime has certainly not been immune to developments and pressures emanating from the country's international and domestic policy environments, the impact of such changes on the Islamic Republic's arms control operations may have been only minor. In short: they have not necessarily altered either the substantive core or the fundamental objectives of the Iranian policy. This conclusion would be supported by the scholarly observation that profound shifts in states' foreign and security policies emerge slowly and are normally rare.[150] It would also be backed by the fact that the issues on the international arms control agenda usually have a long life-span. As a consequence, there is often no urgent need for states to review their initial issue positions on individual arms control matters.

Still, at the same time, the assumption that the possible changes in Iran's arms control operations during the first 25 years of the Islamic Republic's existence have been only minor is challenged by the broadly shared view among Iran scholars according to which the first quarter-century of the Islamic Republic's history can be analytically divided into three separate phases: the Khomeini decade (1979–1989), the Rafsanjani presidency (1989–1997), and the presidency of Muhammad Khatami (1997–2003). The purpose of such three-era periodizations has been to point out that even though many things in Iran have remained constant throughout the Islamic Republic's existence, the country's societal and political life has also experienced a number of significant changes that have set the various stages of the Islamic Republic's development apart from each other.[151]

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[150] As put by Welch (2005: 7): "[...] the ship of state is ordinarily ponderous, not nimble. It is insensitive to minor changes in the environment. It alters course only with great effort, and only when absolutely necessary. The state does not – because it cannot – constantly sample the outside world, adjusting and fine-tuning its behavior so as to optimize something (such as "power" or "the national interest")." For other scholarly discussions making the same point, see Destler (1991: 187) and Gustavsson (1999: 80).

[151] Iran scholars have used different kind of terminology for their three-era periodizations. Wright (2000) and Buchta (2005), for example, speak of the First, Second, and Third (Islamic) Republic, whereas Mozaffari (1999) distinguishes between a Revolutionary, Thermidorian, and an Enigmatic era. It should be noted that some Iran observers have applied the three-era periodization basically only for organizing their narration, whereas others have focused on the nature and the features of the societal and political changes that have taken place in the Islamic Republic as well as sought to identify the factors behind them. The beginning of the Islamic Republic's second era has usually been associated with two events: Iran's announcement, in July 1988, to accept a cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in the summer of 1989. Muhammad Khatami's victory in the May 1997 Iranian presidential

Given that the present work seeks not only to tentatively identify the elements of continuity and change in the Islamic Republic's arms control policy, but also to preliminarily assess how closely the possible changes in Iran's arms control diplomacy have reflected the changes that have characterized Islamic Iran's general foreign policy orientation in the 1979–2003 period, it is necessary here to elaborate, first, on the characteristics of the shifts in the Iranian foreign policy orientation, and, secondly, on the factors that have led the leadership of Islamic Iran to alter the country's foreign policy line during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies.

In the Islamic Republic's first decade, Iran's leaders focused on distancing the country's foreign policy from that of the Pahlavi period and on steering it into a new, revolutionary course. This fundamental shift[152] in Iran's foreign policy resulted in the formulation of an orientation that put great weight on ideological objectives. With a vision of a new world order in mind, the foreign policy officials of the Islamic Republic, led and inspired by Ayatollah Khomeini, openly challenged the existing realities in world affairs, rejected the great powers' domination of the international system, and viewed Iran's Islamic model as a remedy to the ills of the mankind. Hoping to export this model to other countries and to win converts to its cause internationally, the Islamic Republic adopted an active foreign policy line that aimed to transform Iran into a revolutionary global player in international affairs.

Following the end of the Iran–Iraq war and the death of Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's foreign policy took a more moderate direction.[153] While during the Iranian revolution's first decade the profound redirection of Iran's foreign policy had been illustrative of the transformation of the Iranian state, the change of the Iranian regime, the post-Khomeini changes in the country's foreign policy resulted from the Iranian

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election, in turn, has been generally regarded as the starting point for the Islamic Republic's third phase of development.

[152] The transition from the Pahlavi period foreign policy line to the post-revolutionary course amounted to what Hermann (1990: 5–6) refers to as international orientation change. In his conceptual framework, international orientation change is the most extreme form of foreign policy change. As put by Hermann, it "involves dramatic changes in both words and deeds in multiple issue areas with respect to the actor's relationship with external entities."

[153] As noted earlier in section 2.4.2, Islamic Iran's foreign policy had shown initial signs of pragmatism and moderation already during Khomeini's rule. Describing the various trends in Iran's foreign policy under Khomeini, Behrooz (1990: 23–28) speaks of the years 1984–1989 as the pragmatist period in the foreign policy of Khomeini's Iran, the period that marked the beginning of a more pragmatic approach to the conduct of the Islamic Republic's foreign relations.

leaders' conscious efforts to correct the Islamic Republic's foreign policy course.[154] Although the Iranian leadership did not abandon its ideological aspirations, it nevertheless reduced the role of ideological considerations in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. The interests of the Iranian state took supremacy over the Iranian elite's ideological objectives, and the de-ideologization process manifested itself also in the selection of the means to further the country's foreign policy interests. The Islamic Republic resorted increasingly to normal diplomatic channels in the management of its foreign affairs, in addition to which it discarded its strict, ideology-driven differentation between Iran's friends and enemies. Moreover, the Iranian regime's zeal to alter the international system diminished. (Mozaffari 1999: 9, 13–15; Ehteshami 1995: 138–139, 145–146, 165–167 and Buchta 2005: 22, 29)

The trend of de-radicalization, together with the shift from idealism towards an increasing degree of realism and pragmatism that characterized Iran's foreign policy in the Rafsanjani years, subsequently passed into the presidency of Muhammad Khatami. Yet, under Khatami, Iran not only continued to improve its relations with the outside world, step up the conciliatory tone of its foreign policy rhetoric, as well as to declare its commitment to constructive and responsible diplomatic behaviour, but it also began to distance itself from the ideological legacy of the Khomeini period. Unlike his predecessor, who viewed an anti-dogmatic or non-ideological foreign policy as a necessary evil to achieve other ends, president Khatami put the ideological factor back on the top of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy agenda. But unlike in the 1980s, this time the ideological message coming from Iran was welcomed by the outside world. Khatami's emphasis on dialogue and cooperation between cultures and civilizations raised hopes that a moderate and non-confrontational approach to international affairs would become a permanent feature of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy.

What, then, are the factors that led the Islamic Republic to review its foreign policy orientation during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies? Theoretical literature on foreign policy change would suggest that the sources of change are to be found either from Iran's external environment, its domestic circumstances, or from factors pertaining to the Islamic Republic's foreign policy decision-making process.[155] Alternatively,

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[154] For a conceptual distinction between foreign policy change resulting from state transformation or regime change and self-correcting change, that is, foreign policy change that occurs when the existing government chooses to move in a different policy direction, see Hermann (1990: 5).

[155] Instead of speaking about the sources of major foreign policy change, some foreign policy scholars have approached the change problematique by concentrating on factors that are believed to prevent major

change in Iran's foreign policy may have been caused by simultaneous interplay of external, domestic, and decision-making factors. Instead of single-level explanation, thus, a multi-level analysis might constitute a more fruitful approach to the change question.

Basically, major foreign policy changes result either from national decision-makers' recognition that their existing policies are failing or taking too heavy a toll on them in one way or another, or from significant developments in their international environment, most often from dramatic actions taken by other states, which force them to review and alter the policies in place.[156] In the latter case, states not only adjust to independent phenomena in their external environment, but may end up altering their foreign policies also because of the negative consequences their own foreign policy behaviour has had on other international actors. (Hermann 1990: 4, 11–13; Welch 2005: 45 and Goldmann 1988: 6)

The recognition by national decision-makers that their existing foreign policy is flawed and in need of thorough revision may be a genuine move on the part of government representatives or an acknowledgment more or less imposed on them by other politically relevant domestic forces. Put differently, major foreign policy change may originate from the realization by national authoritative decision units, whether individual leaders or groups within the government, that their national foreign policy course has become anachronistic, or from the decision units' tactical efforts to use policy changes as a tool to counter foreign policy criticism presented by domestic political actors, who, of course, may themselves initiate profound foreign policy change if capable of removing the ruling government from office. (Hermann 1990: 7–8, 11–12)

Apart from referring to political, economic, ideological, and other change sources located at the international and the domestic level, foreign policy theorists have pointed out that factors pertaining to the foreign policy decision-making process can play a crucial role in obstructing or facilitating profound foreign policy change. The factors related to the decision-making process have often been viewed as an intervening

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foreign policy change from happening or to at least reduce the scope of change or to delay it. Goldmann (1988), for example, has adopted this logic by introducing the concept of "stabilizers." By them, he refers to phenomena that tend to inhibit foreign policy change even when there is pressure for change. In his framework of analysis, Goldmann distinguishes between four kinds of stabilizers: administrative (identified through the study of the structure and mode of operation of national bureaucracies), political (domestic politics), cognitive (beliefs on which foreign policy is based), and international (a state's external relations).

[156] For the finding that major foreign policy change is often linked to crisis situations, domestic or international, see, for example, Hermann (1990: 16); Gustavsson (1999: 86–87) and Welch (2005: 38).

element in the source-change mechanism, an element determining what ultimate effect international and domestic sources of change will have on foreign policy decision-makers. Theoretical studies of such factors have focused, among others, on the role of national decision-makers' personality traits as well as on the role of their beliefs, perceptions, and other cognitive characteristics in foreign policy change. Moreover, foreign policy analysts have sought, for example, to assess the implications of organizational settings and bureaucratic politics for foreign policy change. (Gustavsson 1999: 77–78, 87; Welch 2005: 31, 44–46 and Hermann 1990: 13)

Iran observers' discussions of the changes in Iranian foreign policy have rarely, explicitly at least, relied on the insights provided by foreign policy theorists. This has also been the case in regard to the studies that have divided the Islamic Republic's foreign policy into three distinctive periods. Only seldom have the three-era periodizations' conclusions about the sources of change in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy been based on clearly spelled-out conceptual frameworks. Yet, the principal change factors identified in them have been highly uniform.

In the first place, the three-era periodizations seem to share the view that the first major shift in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy during the Rafsanjani presidency was primarily caused by Iran's war against Iraq.[157] It was the war – that is, a dramatic event originating from Iran's external environment – and its repercussions that forced Iranian leaders to alter the country's foreign policy course. In order to preserve the Islamic state and regime, they had to embark on post-war economic and military reconstruction and, as a consequence, to increasingly distance their country from a foreign policy orientation that had been dominated by ideological considerations and driven wedges between the Islamic Republic and the rest of the world. The Iranian leadership recognized that the Islamic Republic's post-war economic and military recovery depended on outside assistance and on constructive diplomatic behaviour.

The students of Iran's foreign policy have also viewed the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in the summer of 1989 as a factor that facilitated the transition to a more moderate foreign policy course. It made it easier for the pragmatically oriented members of the Islamic Republic's elite to dissociate themselves from a strict interpretation of the revolution's ideological premises and to get the upper hand of the elite's radical forces. In addition, the post-Khomeini changes in the Islamic Republic's

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[157] For discussions emphasizing the war's central explanatory role, see Ehteshami (1995); Buchta (2005) and Wright (2000).

foreign policy were facilitated by the end of the Cold War and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union and the bipolar international system. The dramatic developments in world politics not only increased the Iranian leaders' sense of the Islamic regime's vulnerabilities and eroded the foundations of the revolutionary Iranian approach to international affairs, but they provided a good opportunity for the Islamic Republic to restructure and improve its relations with the outside world as well. (Moshaver 2005: 180; Wright 2000: 136 and Ehteshami 1995: 145)

Whereas Iran scholars' three-era periodizations have attributed the Rafsanjani-era changes in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy first and foremost to the war, an external source of change, the analyses of the foreign policy shift that took place during the presidency of Muhammad Khatami have ascribed explanatory priority to domestic factors.[158] They have pointed out that it was the Iranian population's deep dissatisfaction with the Islamic Republic's economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions that led them to elect a relatively unknown cleric as their president and to strongly support his reformist political program. The deep-seated domestic problems have also been seen as a catalyst for the changes that occurred in Iran's intra-elite ideological climate and left a mark in the Khatami administration's foreign policy.

The pressures emanating from Iran's external environment, including international processes such as globalization, have received only a secondary role in the three-era periodizations' treatment of the factors explaining change in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy under Khatami. As far as the potential sources of change pertaining to the Iranian foreign policy decision-making process are concerned, they have – legitimately or not – remained more or less absent from Iran scholars' analyses. The relationship between Iranian bureaucratic politics and the aspects of continuity and change in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy is among the research questions related to the decision-making process that have remained unanswered. The general assumption among foreign policy theorists is that the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics acts as an obstacle to foreign policy change. Yet, the high probability that Islamic Iran's core leadership has insulated decision-making on key foreign and security policy matters from bureaucratic pressures would support Welch's (2005: 63) observation that sometimes national leaders manage to govern their countries "almost as though unencumbered by any machinery of government at all."

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[158] Note, for example, the thrust of argument in Ansari (2000); Wright (2000) and Moshaver (2005).

3 ISLAMIC IRAN AND THE CONTROL OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS[1]

3.1 The Shah's Military Legacy

3.1.1 The Iranian military from 1953 to 1968

The year 1953 marked the beginning of the close political and military relationship that evolved between Iran and the United States during the rule of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. Following the U.S.- and British-instigated coup d'état of August 1953 – which removed the nationalist prime minister Muhammad Musaddiq and his government from office and put Muhammad Reza Pahlavi at the helm of political power in Iran – the pro-Western Shah started to strengthen and modernize his armed forces in order to block any future threat, whether internal or external, to the Pahlavi monarchy. The Shah's efforts were strongly supported by the U.S. administration of president Eisenhower who viewed Iran as an integral part of America's Perimeter Defense strategy which aimed to stop the spread of Soviet influence in Asia with the help of local allies. Iran's unique geopolitical location between the Soviet Union and the economically indispensable oil fields of the Persian Gulf made the Shah's regime an important component of the U.S. strategy. (Gasiorowski 1990: 146–147)

The Eisenhower administration's interest in consolidating the Shah's rule domestically and in containing the Soviet Union led the United States to channel large amounts of economic and military aid to Iran. In 1954, the United States gave more than $100 million in economic and military assistance to the Shah's government, a sum that accounted for about 60 percent of the Iranian government's total expenses that year. Between the fiscal years of 1954–1957, the U.S. aid made up some 30 percent of Iranian government expenditures. However, it was not until 1957 that the United States dramatically increased its military aid to Iran. The shift in the U.S. policy was exemplified by the fact that between the short period of 1956–1958, Iran's military expenditures grew from $23 million to $104.9 million. Increased U.S. military assistance enabled the Iranian armed forces to expand in manpower, speed up military

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[1] Armaments that are not classified as WMD are collectively alluded to as conventional weapons. They constitute the main type of weaponry in states' military arsenals. The distinction between conventional and other types of weapons emerged with the advent of nuclear weapons at the end of the Second World War. (Tulliu and Schmalberger 2001: 15)

construction projects, and procure a wide variety of military hardware, including such advanced equipment as F-84G jet fighters. (Ibid.: 149, 151–152)

At the end of the 1950s, the mission of Iran's armed forces began to change. While the military remained as the fundamental pillar, the ultimate guarantor of the Shah's rule, it increasingly started to focus on external threats to Iran's national security. Iran's membership in the Baghdad Pact – an alliance of the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan that was established in 1955 to contain the Soviet Union – and the Shah's increased military cooperation with regional allies were among the practical manifestations of the Iranian military's evolving mission. The shift in Iran's military outlook from regime security to national security was expedited not only by the Shah's perception of the communist threat but by regional developments as well. In particular, the coup carried out in neighbouring Iraq in 1958 by military officers sympathetic to the radical pan-Arab ideology of Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser further convinced the Shah that Iran had to improve its military capabilities against foreign threats. (Chubin 1977: 197–198 and Pollack 2004: 78–79)

Thus, in the course of the 1960s, the Shah tried forcefully to build up Iran's military strength vis-à-vis foreign powers. Apart from the concern over the Soviet and pan-Arab threats,[2] the Shah's armament efforts were influenced by two other key factors. First, the Shah viewed strong national armed forces as a means to make his country more independent of foreign powers and to increase its diplomatic freedom of action.[3] Secondly, the Shah wanted to ensure that Iran would be able to defend itself in the future in case foreign powers would lose their interest in its security. One of the Shah's fears was that the depolarization of the Cold War international system would reduce

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[2] In the 1960s, Egypt's Nasser openly challenged the Shah by claiming that Iran was an oppressor of Arab peoples and a country that sought to colonize the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms. Worried that Nasser's ideology would find a receptive audience among Iran's Arab population in the Khuzistan province and gain a foothold in the Persian Gulf region, the Shah took concrete steps to deal with the pan-Arab threat. In 1964, for example, he assisted Yemeni royalists to fight the country's republicans, who were closely allied with Egypt, by providing them with military equipment and training in Iran. (Marschall 2003: 6–8 and Chubin and Zabih 1974: 72)

[3] Iran's improved relations with the Soviet Union were one indication of the Shah's willingness to pursue a more independent foreign policy course. The relations between the two countries stabilized in 1962 after the Soviet leadership accepted Iranian assurances concerning the United States' military presence in Iran and after the Shah pledged that no foreign missiles capable of threatening the Soviet Union would be deployed on the Iranian soil. The steps taken by Iran paved the way for increased diplomatic and economic cooperation between the two countries. The Shah even made the symbolic gesture of purchasing some military transports from the Soviet Union and hence extending the bilateral cooperation to the military realm. Of course, the Soviet Union never ceased to be the central concern in the Shah's threat analyses. The Shah feared, among others, that the Soviet Union would use some pretext to invoke the 1921 Treaty of Friendship between Iran and the Soviet Union which permitted the Soviet Union to

Iran's importance in Western military calculations. (Chubin 1977: 198 and Pollack 2004: 76)

More specifically, the Shah feared that U.S. commitment to Iran's security would start to fade. The Shah's concerns were fuelled by the worries publicly voiced by U.S. political and military leaders about the social and economic implications of Iran's rapid military build-up. As a result of such worries, in 1959, the United States had decided to cut its military aid to the Shah and, instead, expand its economic assistance to Iran.[4] And after the rise of John F. Kennedy to U.S. presidency in 1961, the Americans began – much to the chagrin of the Shah, who had repeatedly maintained that America's military assistance to his country was not adequate – to increasingly couple their military aid to Iran with demands for democratic reforms in the country. Another key factor that undermined the United States' credibility as a defender of Iran was the Indian–Pakistani war of 1965. In the Shah's view, the decision taken by the Americans to remain neutral in the conflict and not to supply arms to Pakistan, whose military was dependent on U.S. equipment and spare parts, amounted to a blatant abandonment of an ally.[5] (Gasiorowski 1990: 152; Chubin 1977: 198 and Cottrell et al. 1980: 152)

Still, the Shah recognized that the military he envisioned for himself could be created only with the help of the United States. Thus, while continuing to improve Iran's ground forces, in 1965, the Shah began discussing the purchase of F-4 combat aircraft and other sophisticated conventional weaponry from the Americans. That same year, the Shah also started to expand the modest Iranian navy. As a result of Iran's increased oil revenues and the consolidation of the Shah's regime domestically,[6] the United States significantly cut its economic and military assistance to Iran in the mid-1960s. By 1967,

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militarily intervene in Iran if a third party would use the Iranian territory to threaten the Soviet Union's security interests. (Chubin 1977: 197 and Menashri 1990: 100)

[4] In March 1959, the United States and Iran had signed a bilateral agreement in which the United States undertook to continue its military and economic assistance to Iran. In return, Iran had pledged to take effective measures to develop its economy. Most importantly, however, the March 1959 agreement between the United States and the Shah had contained a pledge by the United States to come to Iran's assistance in the case of an aggression against that country. The exact wording of the U.S. pledge read as follows: "In the case of aggression against Iran, the Government of the United States of America, in accordance with the Constitution of the United States of America, will take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as may be mutually agreed upon and as is envisaged in the Joint Resolution to Promote Peace and Stability in the Middle East, in order to assist the Government of Iran at its request." (Ramazani 1975: 282–283 and Pollack 2004: 80)

[5] In the wake of the 1965 war, the Shah stated that "now we know that the United States would not come to aid us if we are attacked" (cited in Chubin and Zabih 1974: 96).

[6] The Shah's armed forces violently suppressed the political activism and demonstrations that took place in Iran during the spring and summer of 1963. The events of 1963 were the last major domestic challenge to the Shah's regime before the commencement of the series of events that led to the 1979 revolution. For a discussion of the political turmoil in Iran in 1963, see Bakhash (1984: 27–30).

both forms of aid were terminated. The change in the nature of U.S.-Iranian arms deals from military assistance to cash and credit sales diminished the Shah's dependence on the Americans and increased his diplomatic freedom to build up and develop his armed forces. (Cottrell et al. 1980: 152; Cottrell and Dougherty 1977: 12 and Gasiorowski 1990: 153)

By 1968, Iran had a military of 221,000 men. Of these, as many as 200,000 served in the country's ground forces which consisted of seven infantry divisions, one armoured division, and an independent armoured brigade. The Iranian air force was composed of 15,000 men and had 200 combat aircraft, including F-4D, F-5, and F-86 fighters. The Shah's navy had 6,000 men and consisted of two U.S. destroyer escorts, two former British escorts of World War II vintage, two U.S.-built minesweepers, as well as of a variety of smaller patrol craft, landing craft, and maintenance ships. In 1968, the money allocated to defence accounted for 5.6 percent of Iran's GNP. This allotment was considerably smaller than the ones witnessed during the massive military military build-up upon which the Shah embarked at the end of the 1960s and which lasted until the 1979 revolution. (*The Military Balance 1968–1969*, 1968: 32–33 and Cottrell et al. 1980: 152)

3.1.2 The decade of massive military build-up

3.1.2.1 The Shah's arms acquisitions

Following the termination of U.S. military aid to Iran, the Shah's government began to buy large amounts of advanced weaponry for the country's armed forces. In 1970, the value of Iran's arms purchases from the United States totalled $127.7 million, and the pace of the Shah's military build-up efforts intensified after the increase in oil prices in 1971 and especially after the huge oil price leap of 1973. The four-fold rise in oil income that year laid the economic foundation for Iran's ambitious arms procurement program. The decision taken in 1972 by the U.S. president Richard Nixon to allow the Shah to buy virtually any type of conventional weaponry from the United States was another crucial factor that cleared the path for Iran's dramatic military build-up in the 1970s. The main rationale of Nixon's decision was to strengthen Iran's ability to defend itself as well as its allies and American interests in the Persian Gulf and hence enable

the Shah to act as Washington's proxy in the region.[7] (Gasiorowski 1990: 153 and Pollack 2004: 104)

The Shah's arms procurement policy was straightforward and unambiguous: he wanted to acquire the most sophisticated hardware available, to buy as much as possible, and to do so as soon as possible. Although the vast majority of the new Iranian weaponry continued to come from the United States – between 1972 and 1976, Iran's purchases from the United States totalled $10.4 billion – Iran bought armaments from other sources as well, including Britain, France, the Soviet Union, Italy, West Germany, and Israel. The hardware obtained from these secondary suppliers ranged from navy frigates, helicopters, tanks, and missiles to artillery, armoured personnel carriers, and small arms. By importing weapons from different sources, the Shah wanted to reduce the risk of becoming too dependent on a single supplier, that is, the United States.[8] He also tried to transform Iran's overall dependence on imported armaments into a political asset by using weapons procurement as a way to strengthen diplomatic relations with the supplier countries. (Chubin 1978: 261–262; Cottrell and Dougherty 1977: 14–15, 40 and Chubin 1977: 220)

The Shah's goal was to simultaneously develop all the services of the Iranian military both quantitatively and qualitatively. As a result of his efforts, the number of soldiers in Iran's ground forces grew from 200,000 men in 1968 to 285,000 men in the summer of 1978. By that time, the ground forces consisted of three armoured divisions, three infantry divisions, four independent brigades – one armoured, one infantry, one airborne, and one special force –, four surface-to-air missile battalions, and an army aviation command. The troops were equipped with a wide variety of weapons systems, including 760 British Chieftain tanks, 860 American M-47/48 and M-60 medium tanks, 250 British Scorpion tanks, and a substantial range of guns and missiles such as the HAWK. Equipment on order at the time included 1,300 Chieftain tanks, improved

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[7] Under the so-called Nixon Doctrine, the United States leant on regional proxies to free up diplomatic and military resources for its superpower competition with the Soviet Union. In the Persian Gulf context, the doctrine took the form of what became known as the "Twin Pillars" strategy. Although the Nixon administration designated Saudi Arabia as one of America's twin pillars in the Gulf – the move was essentially a diplomatic concession to Gulf Arabs – it was the Shah's Iran that played the central role in the U.S. strategy. (Pollack 2004: 102–103)

[8] The diversification of Iran's arms sources mainly concerned the country's ground forces and navy, for the equipment purchased for the Iranian air force were almost exclusively of American origin (Chubin 1978: 262).

HAWK missiles, as well as over 500 American Bell helicopters.[9] (*The Military Balance 1978–1979*, 1978: 37 and Sargent 1979: 275)

The major modernization of the Iranian navy that had been launched by the Shah in the mid-1960s resulted in the creation of by far the most powerful fleet in the Persian Gulf. By mid-1978, the number of men serving in the Iranian navy had reached 28,000 – compared with 6,000 men in 1968 and 11,500 in 1973. The nucleus of Iran's naval inventory consisted of three destroyers and four frigates armed with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles. In addition to the corvettes, patrol boats, minesweepers, landing ships, logistic support ships, and hovercraft in Iran's naval arsenal in 1978, the Shah had, among others, six Type-209 submarines, four Spruance-class destroyers, and six Lupo-class frigates on order. The Iranian navy had also created an air arm that consisted of tens of various types of aircraft.[10] (*The Military Balance 1973–1974,* 1973: 32; *The Military Balance 1978–1979*, 1978: 37 and Sargent 1979: 275)

The highest priority in the Shah's military planning was given to Iran's air force. As a result of the efforts to expand the air force that had begun in 1965, in 1978, the Shah's air force consisted of 459 combat aircraft and 100,000 men – in 1968 and 1973 the number of air force staff had been 15,000 and 40,000, respectively. The aircraft ordered by Iran during the 1970s came from U.S. producers such as Grumman, Northrop, and Mc-Donnell Douglas. The aircraft procured from these manufacturers included F-4E, F-4 Phantom, and F-5E fighters, the highly advanced F-14 Tomcat being the most sophisticated aircraft in Iran's inventory. Moreover, Iran had placed an order for at least 160 F-16 fighters in late 1976 and also negotiated for the purchase of the highly modern multi-mission F-18 aircraft. Taking into account the F-16 fighters, Iran's air force had altogether more than 200 items on order in 1978, including three Airborne Warning and Air Control Systems aircraft.[11]

One aspect of the Shah's highly ambitious military program was to lay the foundation for a major domestic arms industry in Iran. While during the first decades of the Shah's rule arms production in Iran had been confined to the manufacture of small arms and ammunition, in the 1970s Iran began to strive for a national arms industry that would

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[9] For a detailed account of the equipment in the possession of the Iranian ground forces in the summer of 1978, that is, some seven months before the 1979 revolution, see *The Military Balance 1978–1979* (1978: 37).

[10] For a detailed account of the Iranian navy's inventory in 1978, see ibid.

[11] This paragraph draws upon *The Military Balance 1973–1974* (1973: 82); *The Military Balance 1974–1975* (1974: 89); *The Military Balance 1975–1976* (1975: 90); *The Military Balance 1977–1978* (1977:

ultimately be capable of producing most of the weapons needed by the country's military. Iran's desire to reduce its dependence on foreign weapons supplies coincided with foreign arms producers' interest in gaining a foothold in a country that not only was a promising weapons market but also offered cheap land, labour, and raw materials for the manufacturers who were aiming at global production. Consequently, during the 1970s, the Shah's government signed a number of contracts with foreign arms producers regarding the repair, maintenance, and production of sophisticated and low-technology military equipment in Iran. They included projects for the repair and maintenance of F-5 fighters, for the production of Bell 214A and Bell 209AH helicopters, as well as for the production of missiles, light armoured vehicles, and various types of small arms, including light mortars and assault rifles. (Sayigh 1997: 178 and Ehteshami 1990: 42–43)

3.1.2.2 The criticism of the Shah's armament policy

The rapid build-up of the three arms of the Iranian military, together with the Shah government's moves towards military industrialization, posed a heavy burden on the Iranian economy. Between 1972–1978, Iran's military expenditures totalled $54.8 billion. In 1972 and 1973, they accounted for approximately 9 percent of the country's GNP, whereas in 1974 the figure rose to 12.1 percent and in 1975 further to 14.7 percent. In 1976, 13.2 percent and in 1977 11.3 percent of Iran's GNP was directed to the military. The highest share of military expenditures, 15.8 percent of the GNP, was recorded in 1978, the Shah regime's last year in power. Moreover, it is important to note that some of the civilian items in the central government's annual budgets were actually military allocations. During the final years of the 1970s, for example, approximately 70 percent of the money earmarked for public housing ended up in military construction projects. (*World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1972–1982,* 1984: 30 and Moran 1978: 180)

Thus, it was not surprising that the Shah's military program was criticized not only by the Iranian political forces that opposed the Pahlavi regime, but also by observers inside and outside Iran who did not necessarily have anything against the monarchy per se. The criticism voiced by such observers centered on the build-up program's

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97); *The Military Balance 1978–1979* (1978: 37, 105); Cottrell et al. (1980: 156) and Cottrell and Dougherty (1977: 16).

economic aspects. The main point made by them was that the opportunity costs of Iran's military program were extremely high: the Shah's military efforts were seen as an obstacle to much-needed development and infrastructure projects in Iran. The critics also touched upon the phenomena of corruption and waste that hung over Iran's military projects as well as argued that the high priority given to the development of Iran's armed forces led Iranian decision-makers to underestimate the need for dealing with the social discontent that was spreading in the country. While not denying Iran's national security needs, the critics were of the opinion that those needs could have been met with a more moderate strategy. (Moran 1978: 179, 190; Martin 1977: 230, 234 and Zabih 1988: 12)

There were also other considerations that were raised to underline the problems related to Iran's rapid military build-up. Even some political circles in the United States, the Shah's main arms source, seriously questioned the prudence of large-scale arms transfers to Iran. On the one hand, the U.S. critics maintained that arms shipments to Iran were potentially destabilizing and thereby a danger to the security of the Persian Gulf region. Some even regarded the Shah's military efforts as an indication of the monarch's expansionist foreign policy intentions. On the other hand, the U.S. critics emphasized that the Iranians simply were not capable of integrating the large amounts of advanced imported weaponry into their armed forces. The problem of absorption – caused, above all, by the lack of training, research, and production skills, as well as by the lack of organizational capabilities – was recognized also by those who generally supported the Shah's military plans. (Cottrell and Dougherty 1977: 40, 44–45 and Chubin 1997a: 229)

So was the problem of dependence which consisted of two dimensions. In the first place, Iran's inability to manage the imported arms technology not only increased the risk that the sophisticated armaments in Iran's military inventory would become obsolete before the Iranians would actually ever learn to use them, but also raised a more fundamental question. Given the constant advances made in arms technology and the Shah's imperative of acquiring state-of-the-art weaponry for his military, would Iran ever be able to break away from its technological dependence?[12] (Chubin 1977: 220–221)

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[12] The Shah himself recognized that Iran's dependence on foreign, especially American, military technology was not unproblematic (Chubin 1997a: 229).

Secondly, the modernization of Iran's military establishment relied heavily on foreign manpower, a fact that limited, theoretically at least, Iranian armed forces' operational efficiency and freedom of action. Apart from the Iranian opposition groups that condemned the presence of foreign military personnel in their country in cultural and religious terms, the issue of manpower dependence also worried the Shah's U.S. partners who formed the large majority of the foreign military personnel living in Iran. The Americans feared, among others, that the U.S. nationals residing in Iran might end up as hostages in a conflict between Iran and some other regional state and that, therefore, the United States would be forced to become militarily involved in such a conflict. It is estimated that, in 1978, the number of U.S. advisors and technicians involved in defence-related tasks in Iran, together with dependants, comprised some 50,000 people.[13] In addition, there were foreign nationals from countries like Britain and France working on Iranian military projects before the revolution. Also, the Shah's government had brought a large number of workers from India, Pakistan, South Korea, and the Philippines to boost such projects.[14]

Despite the criticism that was levelled at the pace and scale of the Shah's military program, however, the modernization of Iran's armed forces retained its undisputed position as the top issue on the Shah government's agenda. A good example of the Iranian priorities was the fact that, in the fall of 1978, the Iranian government was not ready to cancel the arms orders it had already made, even though the political unrest in the country was gaining momentum and becoming a serious threat to the monarchy. Instead, the government only chose to defer new weapons orders – a decision that amounted to a tactical rather than to a serious effort to re-examine Iran's arms policy. (Moran 1978: 191)

3.1.2.3 The motives of the Shah's rapid military build-up

What were, then, the factors or motives behind the Shah regime's ambitious military program in the 1970s? The main motive for the Shah's determination to rapidly procure large amounts of sophisticated weaponry for his armed forces was to deter potential aggressors from threatening Iran's national security. The neighbouring Soviet Union

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[13] For a list of the U.S. companies participating in defence-related projects in Iran in 1975, see Cottrell et al. (1980: 154).

[14] This paragraph draws upon Cottrell and Dougherty (1977: 47); Zabih (1988: 11); Cottrell et al. (1980: 153) and Chubin (1978: 270).

remained Iran's principal security problem. Although the relations between the two countries had improved since the early 1960s, the basic constellation of mutual suspicion and mistrust stayed unchanged. The period of superpower détente in the 1970s did not alleviate Iranian fears, for from Iran's point of view, improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union contained a potential danger: a better understanding between the two Cold War adversaries could reduce Western powers' interest in blocking Soviet expansionism in Iran's neighbourhood. In other words, Iranian authorities feared that superpower rapprochement might take place at the expense of their country's security interests. (Chubin 1978: 258–259)

Even though the Soviet Union continued to pose the most urgent threat to Iran's national security, the Shah's government also closely followed the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. As far as the Gulf was concerned, Iran needed to adopt itself to the new regional security situation which had resulted from Britain's decision to withdraw its military presence from the Gulf by the end of 1971. The military intentions of neighbouring Iraq, the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' political stability, and the safe transit of Iran's imports and oil exports through the Persian Gulf were the other main issues on the Shah's Gulf security agenda. And in order to secure the safe transit of Iranian oil exports, the Shah had adopted a policy under which his country regarded its security perimeter as extending to the Indian Ocean. The Shah's fear that a hostile actor might cut Iran's access to the Indian Ocean and thereby seriously damage the country's economy had increased after the Soviet Union had entered the region in the late 1960s. The subsequent intensification of the East-West rivalry in the Indian Ocean posed a potential danger both to westward and eastward flow of Iranian oil across the waterway. This largely explained why the Shah eagerly strived for an ocean-going capability for the Iranian navy. (Martin 1977: 226–229 and Chubin 1977: 207–208)

Iran's political, physical, and economic security aside, the Shah's ambitious military program was driven by a host of other factors as well. First, the build-up and modernization of the Iranian military was linked to the Shah's quest for a more active foreign policy: he saw the armed forces as a crucial instrument in support of his country's diplomacy. From 1973 onwards, leaning on Iran's dramatically increasing oil wealth and his role as a regional strongman, the Shah pursued an active foreign policy especially in Iran's immediate neighbourhood. The Shah's offer to put his country's military at the disposal of the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms threatened by domestic opposition

forces, his direct military support for the Omani government fighting local Marxist rebels,[15] and Iran's arms shipments to Somalia that fought a war against Soviet-backed Ethiopians in 1976–1978 were just a few examples of the initiative and new confidence in Iran's foreign policy. (Chubin 1977: 197; Zabih 1988: 4–5 and Pollack 2004: 105)

Moreover, the Shah, who wanted Iran to become a power on the world stage, one of the great powers, coupled the country's military strength with its economic well-being by arguing that, without military power, Iran could not become an economic power. According to the Shah, military capability to deter hostile actors from encroaching Iran's territorial integrity and from coercing Iran into political concessions was a necessary prerequisite for the development of the country's economy. On the other hand, the Shah believed that the process of military modernization would produce significant spin-offs for the civilian sector and thereby benefit the overall development of the Iranian economy. The expansion of Iran's national arms industry was partly based on this idea of spill-over. All in all, then, the Shah did not believe in the conceptual division between guns and butter. He was convinced that Iran could have both. (Martin 1977: 227 and Chubin 1978: 267–268)

The Shah viewed his strengthened armed forces also as a vehicle for the modernization and Westernization of the Iranian society. Furthermore, he used the build-up process to get a firmer grip on the military itself. By deliberately fuelling competition within the armed forces over the fruits of the build-up process – that is, over resources and career advances – the Shah tried to bolster his senior officers' loyalty to the Pahlavi monarchy. In fact, the national and international image of the monarchy were important considerations in the Shah's military program. The monarch wanted to create a powerful and respectable Iranian military that would serve as a symbol of the achievements of his reign. (Zabih 1988: 6 and Chubin 1997a: 229)

3.1.3 The Shah's Iran and arms control

As the discussion above suggests, the Shah's Iran was far more interested in obtaining arms than in controlling them. Yet, this did not mean that arms control played no role in Iran's foreign and security policies during the Shah's rule. Under the Pahlavi

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[15] Between 1973 and 1976, there were some 3,000 Iranian troops stationed in Oman, in support of the country's ruler, in connection with the successful Dhufar counter-insurgency operation (Zabih 1988: 11). For a discussion of the conflict between the Omani government and the Soviet-backed Dhufari rebels and Iran's involvement in it, see Ramazani (1979: 75–80).

monarch, Iran took regularly part in multilateral diplomatic deliberations on arms control and recognized the need for measures that would halt arms competition both in the area of conventional weaponry and WMD. According to the Shah's arms control officials, the world had reached a stage in which the use of military force – depicted by the Iranians as a normal feature of inter-state relations – jeopardized the ability of humanity to return to a peaceful and human manner of life after armed conflicts. As stated by the Iranian foreign minister addressing the UN General Assembly's first special session on disarmament in June 1978: "[...] given the new dimensions and sophistication of armaments, modern man no longer has a guarantee that he will be able to return to a normal life after heightened conflict and warfare." (A/S-10/PV.18, 1978: 338)

Under these conditions, Iran's arms control officials pointed out, the community of nations had to strive for what they saw as the ultimate objective of all arms control efforts also called for by the UN: general and complete disarmament under effective international control (A/C.1/33/PV.14, 1978: 67). Thus, the Shah's government pursued a two-track policy in the sense that it not only wanted to guarantee Iran's national security by significantly strengthening the country's armed forces, but it also considered it necessary for Iran to be involved in international arms control diplomacy. The signing, among others, of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the Seabed Treaty in 1971, the Environmental Modification Convention in 1977, and particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968 and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in 1972 were clear indications of Iran's desire to be a party to international arms control arrangements.[16]

One of the themes Iranian representatives often brought up in their arms control pronouncements was the link between arms control and the economic conditions of the world. The Iranians argued that the contribution of arms control to international peace and security would remain modest unless the problems of poverty and economic dislocation were seriously tackled by the international community. Wide and growing welfare gaps were seen by the Iranians as a factor which, in the long run, would constitute a fundamental obstacle to the preservation of international peace and stability. Also, Iran's officials pointed out that arms acquisitions drained national resources that were urgently needed for development purposes. While such remarks might strike as

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[16] For a list of the multilateral arms control instruments signed by Iran both before and after the 1979 revolution, see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/DDAHome.htm>.

surprising given the Shah government's own dramatic military build-up, the crux of the Iranian argument was that it was the arms race between the major powers that was at the root of the problem. As put by the foreign minister of Iran in June 1978: "It should be recalled that nearly a third of all the scientific and technological manpower and research expenditures of the industrial powers is geared to military purposes and that a very few industrial countries account for three fourths of the total world military spending." As a consequence, the Shah's foreign minister continued, if the industrial world continued to allocate enormous resources to military purposes, the much-sought new international economic order would stand little chance of success.[17] (A/S-10/PV.18, 1978: 338–339)

Arms control considerations were also present in Iran's regional policy. The Shah's Iran was one of the main supporters of the initiative that called on the UN to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. The meeting of non-aligned countries in Lusaka, Zambia, in September 1970 was an important landmark for the initiative. The conference declared that the Indian Ocean should become a zone of peace from which great power rivalries, military bases, and nuclear weapons would be excluded. Iran supported the non-aligned countries' declaration and was subsequently among the drafters of the 1971 UN declaration that called for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The declaration called for a halt to further expansion of great power military presence in the Indian Ocean and for the elimination from that area of all bases, military installations, nuclear weapons, and other types of WMD. Moreover, it called on the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean, on the permanent members of the UN, as well as on other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to ensure that their warships and aircraft would not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against any of the region's littoral or hinterland states. (Cottrell and Burrell 1972: xxiii and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1971,* 1974: 33–34)

Despite the fact that the zone of peace proposal received wide support among the members of the world organization, the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France – expressed their reservations about the initiative and accordingly watered down its implementation. Nevertheless, the Indian Ocean initiative remained on the agenda of the UN throughout the 1970s, and Iran continued to voice its support for the proposal. In October 1978, for example, the

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[17] Iran called for a wider international recognition of the connection between arms control and development and strongly supported UN-led efforts to study that connection: "We consider this to be one of the most vital undertakings to promote disarmament as well as to assure progress towards global social and economic goals." (A/C.1/33/PV.14, 1978: 67 and CD/PV.6, 1979: 32)

Iranian representative addressing the UN General Assembly restated Iran's interest in the zone of peace plan: "As a bordering state, Iran will continue its efforts within and outside the United Nations system to contribute to the achievement of that objective and will assist in keeping the zone free from great-power rivalry." Moreover, Iran's representatives were of the opinion that the zone of peace idea should be extended to cover other geographical areas of the world as well. (A/33/PV.20, 1978: 386 and A/C.1/33/PV.14, 1978: 71)

Iran's position on the Indian Ocean proposal is a good example of how the Shah's government used arms control as an instrument of foreign policy. Although the Shah undoubtedly regarded military power as the best way of securing Iran's interests in the Indian Ocean, arms control played a role, albeit a secondary, in the execution of the Iranian strategy in the region. The same cannot be said about Iran's Persian Gulf strategy which centered more or less exclusively on military power. As Iran's policy in the Gulf was based on the view that the maintenance of Gulf security was the regional states' exclusive responsibility (A/33/PV.20, 1978: 386), the basic question remaining for the Shah was whether to act unilaterally or together with other Gulf states in this regard. In the end, in the course of the 1970s, Iran promoted both approaches. While occupied with the build-up of the Iranian armed forces, the Shah's government simultaneously promoted the idea of a regional security arrangement. Due to differing interpretations among the Gulf states of the benefits and feasibility of regional security cooperation, however, Iran's diplomatic proposals – ranging from a formal defence pact to a loose and informal understanding – did not lead to concrete results.[18] (Chubin 1977: 205–206)

On balance, it is clear that the Shah had no rosy expectations of international arms control deliberations' security benefits to his country. Iran's general skepticism towards arms control manifested itself, for example, in the statement it made to the UN in October 1978: "Though disarmament deliberations in the past, whether in the General Assembly or in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, have produced some agreements and treaties, those have for the most part been partial measures. In fact many of the measures previously agreed upon remain such a far cry from meaningful

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[18] The only exception was the bilateral security agreement of March 1974 between Iran and Oman. In the agreement, which stressed that the ensurance of security and stability in the Hormoz Strait and its adjoining seas was the responsibility of the bordering states, the two parties agreed to hold regular consultations and take coordinated and joint measures, including the use of each other's facilities when deemed necessary, in order to safeguard security in the region (Marschall 2003: 10, 213).

disarmament that global peace and security have hardly been enhanced." According to the Iranian representative addressing the Geneva-based Committee on Disarmament in January 1979, the reasons for the problems and the meager results in international arms control diplomacy were known to everyone: "One need only read the newspapers to note the increasing number of military-related items. Conflict and hostilities abound, and weapons developments are reported with spreading headlines." (A/C.1/33/PV.14, 1978: 66 and CD/PV.6, 1979: 28)

As the Shah's officials believed that international arms control diplomacy had not managed to significantly contribute to states' national security, they often emphasized that each country, naturally including Iran, had the right to prepare itself militarily to defend its security. That this same argument was also put to use to quell international criticism of the Shah's ambitious armament policy was illustrated by the following Iranian statement: "[…] the discussion about arms expenditures is inextricably linked to the question of national security. We cannot disregard the fact that as long as it remains impossible to establish viable international security arrangements through the United Nations, nations cannot be prevented from taking into consideration the requirements of their national security." For the Iranians, then, military force was the only instrument that was capable of guaranteeing Iran's and other states' national security. Indeed, in the Shah's thinking, military weakness was a threat to peace and an invitation to attack. (CD/PV.6, 1979: 32 and Chubin 1978: 259)

On the whole, then, the Shah's Iran remained highly skeptical about the future of international arms control. Still, it did not reject diplomatic deliberations on the subject and called for international measures that would further the cause of arms control. Iranian officials argued that the vicious cycle of military action and reaction could be broken, but that it would require that the major powers would be the first to opt for arms control because it was the military competition between them that acted as the principal driving force behind the world-wide arms build-up. The Iranians pointed out that the major powers' near-monopoly in military research, development, and supply placed on those powers a special responsibility to formulate and implement measures that would ultimately lead to general and complete disarmament. A corollary of this Iranian argument was the view that progress in conventional arms control was ultimately dependent on achievements in nuclear arms control. Even though the Shah's officials stressed that steps taken in the area of conventional arms control should not await the elimination of nuclear weapons, they nevertheless maintained that achievements in

nuclear arms control were a prerequisite for significant diplomatic results in conventional arms control. Iran's representatives argued that by stepping up its arms control efforts, the international community could block the world-wide build-up of conventional armaments. As one Iranian arms control official put to his foreign colleagues at the CD, "it is our job to seek to reverse this trend, to make the limitation of armaments a working policy of all governments." (A/S-10/PV.18, 1978: 338–339; A/C.1/33/PV.14, 1978: 71 and CD/PV.6, 1979: 28)

3.2 Entering the Debate: Islamic Iran's Initial Remarks on Arms Control

3.2.1 Denouncing the Shah's military build-up

At the rhetorical level at least, Iran's arms control policy changed dramatically as a result of the 1979 revolution. As the post-Pahlavi Iran's foreign and security policies were revised to correspond with the country's political and ideological transformation, it was inevitable that the policy changes would also leave a mark in Iran's arms control operations. Given that the new Iranian elite needed time for gaining full control of Iran's government structures and for setting the agenda of objectives for the newly founded Islamic Republic, however, it took a while before Iran's arms control policy began to take its new distinctive shape. As pointed out by the Iranian representative speaking to the Committee on Disarmament in July 1979, "the Iranian revolution, which has shaken the foundations of the former regime, is engaged in a thorough reassessment of Iranian foreign and domestic policy" (CD/PV.45, 1979: 6).

But while waiting for the explicit formulation of the new regime's stands on various arms control issues, Iranian officials at home and those representing the Islamic Republic abroad – at first including many officials who had been appointed to their posts by the Shah's government – did not have to operate empty-handed. In fact, the first major theme raised by them was foreseeable. Since the Shah's military efforts had been among the questions Iran's various revolutionary forces had all strongly objected to, it was only natural that the starting point for post-Pahlavi Iran's arms control argumentation was to distance the Islamic Republic's military and security policies from those of the Shah regime.

In addition to cautiously repeating some of the Iranian arms control stands originating from the Shah`s time, most of which were related to the control of WMD, thus, the

Iranian representative addressing the Committee on Disarmament in July 1979 underscored the differences between the policies of the former and the current Iranian regimes and strongly criticized the Shah's armament policy. According to the Iranian representative, the Pahlavi regime had masqueraded itself as a defender of arms control, while in practice, it had devoted a very large part of Iran's GNP to armaments. To support his argument, the official referred to the growth of Iran's military spending under the Shah. Whereas in 1953, under Muhammad Musaddiq's government, Iran's military expenditures had constituted only 2 percent of the country's GNP, the representative of the Islamic Republic argued, in 1971 the share of defence costs had risen to 12 percent and in 1977 to 25 percent of the GNP. The Iranian representative also pointed out that after the major oil price rises in the early 1970s, the budget of the Iranian army had increased fivefold from $2 billion in 1973 to $10 billion in 1975, and that it had kept on increasing until the eve of the "great revolution of 1979."[19] (Ibid.)

In the Iranian representative's opinion, the Shah government's quest for military power had taken place at the expense of ordinary Iranian people whose urgent needs had been ignored. In 1977–1978, in proportion to its revenue, the official maintained, Iran had possessed the biggest military budget in the world. The Shah regime's focus on the military sector, the representative of the Islamic Republic continued, had meant that during that two-year period, the former Iranian government had almost totally neglected the development of the country's health and other public services. Thus, the official of the Islamic Republic summed up, "when the supporters of the former regime talked about disarmament, it was pure cynicism and hypocrisy." (Ibid.: 7)

Apart from discrediting the Shah's domestic priorities and questioning the motives of pre-revolutionary Iranian regime's arms control policy, the representative of the Islamic Republic pledged that the new leadership in Iran would not follow the former regime's footsteps: "The provisional government of the Islamic Republic of Iran aims in its domestic policy at creating a fairer, more humane society, in conformity with the high values of Iranian culture and Islam. [...] it follows, so far as concerns the crucial problems of arms and disarmament, that the Iranian people, the leaders of its revolution

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[19] One of the first major diplomatic steps taken by the post-Pahlavi Iranian government was to cancel the orders – with the total value of $11 billion – placed for U.S. armaments by the ousted Shah. The Islamic Republic also cancelled the orders made by the Shah for military equipment from secondary suppliers, such as France and West Germany. Moreover, in the course of 1979, the Islamic Republic declared its willingness to resell to the United States or to any other country weaponry that had been purchased by Iran shortly before the Shah's overthrow. In the spring of 1980, not long before the outbreak of the Iran–

and its government intend to break away from the hypocritical practices of the former regime." (Ibid.: 6)

The policies of the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime were strongly criticized also in the statement delivered by Iran at the UN General Assembly's First Committee in October 1979. According to Iran's committee representative, for over 10 years, the Shah's regime had been engaged in a military build-up that had reached "psychopathic proportions" and diverted much-needed human and material resources of the Iranian people to war-like purposes. He also pointed out that the Shah's military efforts had been supported by a number of foreign countries – such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, the Soviet Union, and Israel – eagerly selling weaponry to Iran's armed forces. And still in the end, the Iranian representative concluded, "even the latest innovations in weapon gadgetry had not been able to save an infested regime from the wrath of its own people." (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 58)

3.2.2 Arms transfers as instruments of imperialism

The weapons transfers to the Shah's military from abroad constituted another central theme in Iran's arms control argumentation immediately after the revolution. Elaborations on the subject by Ibrahim Yazdi, the foreign minister of Iran's provisional government headed by prime minister Mihdi Bazargan, provided an illuminative sample of the new Iranian leadership's attempts to distance Islamic Iran from the policies of Pahlavi Iran. According to Yazdi, the first high Iranian official after the revolution to address the UN General Assembly's annual session, international arms transfers to Iran during the Shah period had been manifestations of international arms producers' "imperialistic" designs. He argued that by providing the Shah with "repressive technology" and by contributing to the militarization of the Iranian society, imperialists had hoped to maintain the political status quo in Iran. Such a status quo, Yazdi claimed, would have enabled imperialists to continue the "exploitation and manipulation" of the Iranian people. In Yazdi's view, the Shah – who was emphasized by the Iranian foreign minister to have used severe repression and oppression against his own countrymen – had collaborated with imperialists in the implementation of their schemes. (A/34/PV.21, 1979: 447)

Iraq war, for example, the officials of the Islamic Republic still tried to sell Iran's F-4 Phantom fighters to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (Menashri 1990: 98–99; Chubin 1997a: 230 and Marschall 2003: 67)

The foreign minister of the Islamic Republic stressed to his international audience that arms transfers to subservient local rulers in the developing world were among the principal methods through which the major powers pursued their imperialistic policies. Yazdi pointed out that those who produced and sold armaments lived in a few advanced industrial countries, whereas those who used the ever more sophisticated weaponry were more and more often the impoverished peoples of the Third World. Arms trading, Yazdi concluded, was a new but a less visible form of domination and exploitation to which the "wretched of the earth" were subjected. In the Iranian foreign minister's analysis, the poor of the world had become the fighters of the proxy wars of the rich, and for this reason, the militarization of politics in the Third World had reached an alarming stage. Yazdi reminded that, more often than not, imperialists justified their weapons shipments by referring to the arms receiving countries' security needs. Yet the true motives of such arms transfers lay elsewhere: "Both the East and the West are exploiting the misperceptions and militarization of the Third World countries in accordance with their imperialistic game-plans, which include the expansion of their own self-serving arms race. [...] nationalism, once a source of solidarity against imperialism, is now becoming an excuse for militarized societies to engage in civil and regional wars." (Ibid.: 448)

The foreign minister of the Islamic Republic also pointed out that Iran's experience as a victim of the imperialistists' ambitions was not a unique one. On the contrary, the fate of the Iranian people had already been shared by many other nations. In Yazdi's view, too many governments continued to use imported armaments against their own peoples, often more effectively than the arms producers had originally intended. In the same manner, too many governments continued to spend more money on "institutions of coercion" than on education or public health. In Yazdi's assessment, the Shah of Iran had probably been "the most irrational ruler in this category," but he added that there were still plenty of "smaller shahs" in the world. (A/34/PV.21, 1979: 446–447)

In the Iranian foreign minister's reading of international relations, militarization of politics in the Third World through arms transfers was something that would continue to peril the peoples of the developing world in the foreseeable future.[20] Still, Yazdi

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[20] According to Yazdi, imperialists' dominance of the world based on their economic and military power. Economic resources made it possible for them to build up military capabilities which, in turn, were employed to exploit other nations not only economically but culturally as well: "[...] as the economic gap between the privileged few and the wretched many increases, so does the cultural gap. The enclaves of

believed that through concerted national and international efforts, the imperialistic policies of the major powers could be blocked. His belief that the prevailing circumstances in the Third World could be altered stemmed, above all, from the experience of the Iranian revolution. The foreign minister of the new Iranian regime emphasized that the problems of insecurity and violence in the Third World could be effectively dealt with only in native socio-cultural contexts. Reliance on any other formula would help imperialists to continue to hold a grip over the Third World. (Ibid.: 448)

Yazdi argued that the UN had a special responsibility to help developing countries in their battle against imperialism and, therefore, also an obligation to focus on the problem of international arms transfers: "It is the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the United Nations should be as active in combatting the new forms of imperialism as it was in the struggle against colonialism. The cultural domination and militarization of the Third World can be as destructive of the rights and humanity of nations as violation of their sovereignty." According to the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic, the UN cannot ignore the crimes of authoritarian rulers on the basis that they are committed within national boundaries. If authoritarian rulers procure their arms, ammunition, and weapons technology from abroad, he argued, then the deliberations on their crimes cannot be confined within national boundaries, either. Finally, Yazdi also made it known that, in the eyes of Islamic Iran, the legitimacy of the UN depended on how the world organization would manage to help Third World countries to fight imperialism in practice. (Ibid.)

3.2.3 Assurances of diplomatic participation

The points made by foreign minister Yazdi at the UN in October 1979 were repeated in subsequent statements delievered by other Iranian officials. In view of Islamic Iran's revolutionary outlook on international issues, it was not surprising that those pronouncements often started with an explicit expression of Iran's disappointment at the achievements of international arms control diplomacy. This was the case, for example, in October 1979 when the Islamic Republic addressed the UN General Assembly's First Committee. Referring to the results of contemporary international arms control, Iran's

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wealth and power in many under-developed countries are also enclaves of imported cultures and life-styles." (A/34/PV.21, 1979: 446–447)

committee representative told his foreign colleagues that the balance sheet of their collective efforts had remained a record of consistent failures and only incidental gains: "The simple truth is that we have been operating in an international enclave with little or no input into the mainstream of political decisions. The voices which echo in this room vanish into stacks of documents, never allowed to bother the conscience of those whose judgements and decisions matter in shaping world events." (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 52)

According to the Iranian official, there was plenty of evidence to validate his claim. The extent of military spending in the world, he argued, showed that reliance on military power continued to dominate the policies of states. The 1970s, designated as a disarmament decade by the UN, the Iranian representative continued, had brought in its wake a doubling of overall military expenditure in the world. From the Iranian perspective, it was the vast increases in great power military spending that was the real source of concern. To be sure, the Islamic Republic's representative in the First Committee argued, arms control as a goal had been supported by the great powers at a high level of rhetorical consistency. But in the final analysis, he added, it had become clear that they did not possess the political will to act. Among those advocating and benefiting from such political inaction were the "powerful military bureaucracies, influential and richly financed weapon industries, their lobbies, their captive legislators, those for whom paranoia or past wars are a way of life." (Ibid.)

Iran's representative stressed that the great powers' constant rearmament efforts had produced dire consequences for the countries of the Third World. He argued that the vast increases in major powers' military spending had enabled them to project power in a more menacing way and to draw the nations of the Third World into big power conflicts to fight their wars as proxies. Moreover, the representative of the Islamic Republic stressed, the imposition of the great power "power play" on the Third World had meant that developing countries' scarce resources had been channelled to military procurement, resulting in arms race patterns similar to those among the great powers, and it had also led to the persistence of racial and colonial domination in the Third World as well as to the imposition of ideologies alien to indigenous cultures. (Ibid.: 57–58)

Islamic Iran's arms control officials did not hesitate to claim that Iranians knew what they were talking about when alluding to the dangers and repercussions of arms competition and aggressive military policies. Before the 1979 revolution, they argued,

the Iranian people had been subject to the Shah's senseless and burdensome military efforts. And after the revolution, the argument went on, the Islamic Republic had become the target of great power hostility. As lamented by one Iranian official: "The recent escalation of the United States presence in the Indian Ocean and its extension to the Persian Gulf is a glaring example of imperialistic pursuits aimed at harassment and intimidation of people who strive to protect their dignity and independence. [...] increasingly, we see less inhibitions on the part of responsible officials to show off capabilities and to apply brute force under such headings as 'contingency force,' 'rapid deployment forces,' 'unilateral corps,' and so on." Instead of contributing to the creation of an international climate of peace, stability, and understanding, the officials of the Islamic Republic warned, such developments heightened mutual suspicions and led to further aggravation of arms competition at the global and the regional level. (Ibid.: 57 and CD/PV.82, 1980: 20)

In addition to pointing to U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean,[21] Iranian officials used Operation Eagle Claw – the unsuccessful U.S. military rescue mission of April 1980 to free the staff of the U.S. embassy held hostage in Iran – as further evidence of great power hostility towards Iran.[22] Iranian officials condemned the operation as a military aggression against their country, said that the incident would aggravate the security situation in the Persian Gulf region, and deplored the double-facedness of the U.S. government which only recently, the Iranians maintained, had declared that the United States would refrain from using force against Iran. In the Iranian interpretation, the failed American military operation testified to the U.S goverment's unwillingness to admit that the logic of "gunboat diplomacy" belonged to the past. (CD/PV.82, 1980: 20–21)

As far as Islamic Iran's own policies were concerned, Iranian officials emphasized that their country had no military ambitions whatsoever. According to them, the people

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[21] The administration of president Carter significantly increased the United States' military presence in the Gulf as a response to the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran by a group of militant students on 4 November 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Apart from the AWACS aircraft stationed in Saudi Arabia and the B-52 bombers overflying the Arabian Sea, by October 1980, the United States had 32 warships, including three aircraft carriers, operating in the Indian Ocean basin (Marschall 2003: 181).

[22] For the background and details of the U.S. operation, see Sick (1985: 280–302) and Pollack (2004: 153–169). As a result of the November 1979 occupation of the U.S. embassy and the hostage crisis that ensued, the United States had broken off its diplomatic relations with Iran on 7 April 1980. The hostage crisis had isolated Iran in the international system and estranged it particularly from the West. The seizure of the U.S. embassy and the taking of the American hostages had been explicitly disapproved, among others, by the International Court of Justice, the UN Security Council, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. (Ramazani 1983: 13)

of Iran genuinely aspired to peace, and it was the Iranian authorities' task to realize the wishes of Iran's "liberated masses." Participation in international arms control diplomacy was regarded as one way of doing so. Iran's representatives stressed that despite its doubts and reservations, the Islamic Republic would contribute to international deliberations in the field of arms control.[23] Also, they continued to repeatedly point out that there was an essential qualitative difference between the Islamic Republic's and the Shah regime's arms control policies. Whereas the monarchical regime had used arms control as a façade behind which the Shah government's vicious intentions had been hidden, the Iranian argument went, the Islamic Republic wanted to genuinely work for the cause of arms control: "We speak on these [arms control] issues with no claim to novelty yet with a clear conscience. For no longer do our words seek to disguise an adventurous military build-up under the euphemism of national defence. No longer are they phrased to justify the plundering of the main source of our national livelihood in exchange for military hardware." (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 51)

Indeed, the representatives of the Islamic Republic were of the opinion that in light of the bad experiences of the people of Iran with the Shah and foreign governments, the Islamic Republic had extra moral credit when making calls for the intensification of international arms control efforts. For example, the Iranians maintained, their country's pleas for the scale-down of arms competition in the Third World through regional cooperation had great moral authority because the Iranian people had had the misfortune of suffering from a senseless national arms build-up. To further portray the Islamic Republic's arms control policy as serious and tinged with initiative, Iranian representatives pointed out that, after the revolution, the newly founded Islamic Republic had swiftly dismantled military bases and dissociated Iran from military alliances.[24] As the foreign minister of Iran's provisional government stated, the Islamic

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[23] One Iranian official characterized the Islamic Republic's approach to international arms control as follows: "[...] our criticism reflects no hostility, just as our pessimism conveys no sense of despair" (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 51).

[24] After the revolution, Iran had taken immediate steps to withdraw from the Shah's international military commitments. Thus, in March 1979, the post-Pahlavi regime had pulled back the Iranian troops sent to Oman by the Shah in 1973. Similarly, in March 1979, Iran had withdrawn from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the successor to the Baghdad Pact which had been renamed by the remaining members after Iraq had withdrawn from it in 1959. By the time of the Iranian revolution, CENTO had largely transformed into a framework for economic cooperation between its member states. As far as the United States was concerned, Iran's post-revolutionary government had closed down the two intelligence collection sites of the United States – providing data on the Soviet Union's missile tests – in northern Iran, and later, on 5 November 1979, the Islamic Republic cancelled Iran's bilateral defence agreement of 1959 with the Americans. On the same day, the Islamic Republic also abrogated the security-related

Republic was committed to the stance that "the maintenance and propagation of bloc alliances based on a military network" only served the cause of "imperialism and tyranny." Thus, the Islamic Republic vehemently opposed the presence of foreign military forces and bases on the territory of other and especially Third World countries. From the perspective of the Iranian leadership, such presence was a manifestation of "hegemonism." (Ibid.: 58, 61 and A/34/PV.21, 1979: 445)

The Islamic Republic also informed that it would join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in order to pursue a policy of peace and friendship on the basis of justice, equality, and mutual respect, and that it looked forward to a very active membership in it. According to Iranian officials, the Islamic Republic's identification with non-aligned countries was consistent with the policy of former nationalist prime minister Muhammad Musaddiq, designated by the Iranians as one of the original advocates of non-alignment. In addition, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that great power imperialism and its negative implications could be countered only if arms control measures focusing on the tools of violence coincided with a moral transformation among nations. As urged by Ibrahim Yazdi: "We must also confront the habits and perceptions which we have inherited and internalized without thought or reflection." The representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the reliance of the Iranian people on their moral power when confronting the military might of the Shah's regime was a compelling piece of evidence of the fact that, in the end, weapons cannot overcome the moral strength of the people. Accordingly, Iranian representatives stressed, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic would be based on the doctrines of the Koran, the tradition of Prophet Muhammad, and on the principle of "neither East nor West, only the Islamic Republic." The outer boundaries of Islamic Iran's arms control policy had been established. (A/34/PV.21, 1979: 444–446 and A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 58–59)

3.3 Arms Control in the Context of War

As a result of Iran's war with Iraq, starting in September 1980, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations became part of its war effort. While during the first months after the revolution Iranian arms control officials had concentrated on criticizing the

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articles V and VI of Iran's 1921 Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union. (Marschall 2003: 64; Menashri 1990: 100, 156; Gasiorowski 1990: 158–159 and Pollack 2004: 122)

policies of the Shah and presenting the rudiments of the post-Pahlavi regime's arms control thinking, the war with Iraq necessitated that all aspects of Iranian diplomacy were put in the service of the country's war policy. Accordingly, in 1980–1988, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations strongly reflected its experiences and needs in the war. As discussed below in chapter 4, the role of arms control as a diplomatic extension of Iran's war policy became most evident in the area of chemical arms control. Militarily unable to deter Iraq from using chemical weapons against Iranian troops and civilians, the Islamic Republic launched a diplomatic offensive from 1984 onwards to fiercely condemn Iraq's chemical warfare and to call for international measures against Iraq's use of WMD. Yet, the Iranians made use of arms control as a diplomatic instrument also in connection with issues that pertained to the use of conventional weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war.

3.3.1 The Islamic Republic's perception of the Iran-Iraq war

The Iraqi invasion of Iran on 22 September 1980 took the Iranian leadership by surprise. Despite the fact that the relations between Iran and Iraq had significantly deteriorated since the Iranian revolution – resulting, among others, in sporadic low-intensity armed clashes along the land border between the two countries –, the Iranian leadership had not expected that the tensions would eventually lead to an Iraqi invasion and all-out war. This was later acknowledged, among others, by Iran's president Ali Khamenei who, in September 1987, told the UN General Assembly that with regard to the Iraqi attack, "we were at first taken by surprise, we should admit." In his address to the General Assembly, Khamenei also expressed the official Iranian view according to which the Iranian leadership's preoccupation with innumerable internal problems, together with the post-revolutionary regime's lack of experience in government affairs, had been the main factors enabling the Iraqi army to penetrate into Iranian soil. (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 38)

While the authorities of the Islamic Republic admitted that they had initially been perplexed by Iraq's military move, they argued that the motives behind the Iraqi attack themselves were easy to recognize. In essence, Iranian officials depicted the war as an imperialistic conspiracy against the Iranian revolution and the country's new regime.[25]

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[25] In the Iranian view, the war started by Iraq was the culmination of the efforts of imperialists and their local allies to destroy the achievements and the future of the Iranian revolution. Iranian officials claimed

The officials of the Islamic Republic maintained that the "imposed war," as it became officially known in Iran, was a consequence of the fact that "the Islamic revolution of Iran and the downfall of the Shah had shattered the classic vision of power in the Middle East and upset the division of the world by the superpowers into zones of influence." More specifically, the Iranians claimed that Iran's revolution and the Islamic regime's intention to free the Persian Gulf region from superpower influence had turned the political and military calculations of imperialists, and particularly those of the United States, upside down and led the superpowers to review their policies in the region. As a result, instantly after the revolution, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued, imperialistic powers had started to pursue two main objectives in the Persian Gulf: first, to find a replacement for the Shah as the subservient regional strongman, and secondly, to destroy the anti-imperialistic revolution in Iran. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 673 and A/C.1/35/PV.20, 1980: 43)

In Iranian officials' reading of the causes of the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein's Iraq had taken the role previously belonging to the Shah as the regional "servant" of imperialists. In the words of one Iranian official: "The forces of imperialism were fortunate. They found an oppressive and ambitious regime in that area [the Persian Gulf] which was not only more than ready to replace the Shah, but also ready to attempt to destroy the Islamic revolution by using the most barbaric and inhumane methods […]" (ibid.: 44–45). In the Iranian view, thus, Saddam Hussein's war objectives were ultimately defined by imperialists and particularly by the United States – the imperialistic power that had lost "one of its most loyal and powerful allies in the form of the Shah's corrupt regime" (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 109–110). The officials of the Islamic Republic argued that Iraq's invasion of Iran and its effort to expand its borders were part of the plan to elevate Saddam Hussein's Iraq to the position of a leading regional power that would protect the interests of imperialists by trying to destroy the Islamic revolution in Iran, topple the Iranian regime, and prevent the Iranian revolution – considered a model for other nations – from spreading to other parts of the Muslim

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that actions against the revolution and the Islamic Republic by foreign powers had begun shortly after the downfall of the Shah's regime and included criminal measures such as bombings, assassinations, attempted military coups d'état, and commando missions. According to the Iranians, imperialistic powers had tried to fuel domestic unrest and supported counter-revolutionary forces in Iran also after the commencement of the Iran-Iraq war. Thus, for example, the bomb explosion in Tehran on 30 August 1981 – which killed Muhammad Ali Rajai, the newly elected president of the Islamic Republic, as well as prime minister Muhammad Javad Bahunar – was attributed to the United States and its local agents. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 671, 673; A/42/PV.6, 1987: 33–37 and A/36/PV.26, 1981: 107)

and the "oppressed" world. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 673; A/37/PV.27, 1982: 518 and A/38/PV.13, 1983: 188)

Iranian authorities further maintained that Saddam Hussein's thirst for "personal glory and grandeur" had also played a role, albeit a secondary one, in Iraq's decision to invade Iran. As underscored by one Iranian arms control diplomat: "Indeed, Saddam's personal ambition to become the new gendarme of the region, particularly in the absence of the Shah, cannot be underestimated" (A/37/PV.41, 1982: 717). The Iraqi president was believed by the Iranians to be striving for the annexation of Iran's Khuzistan province in order to get hold of its oil resources and to acquire an easy access to the strategically crucial Persian Gulf. Moreover, Saddam Hussein was told to be trying to gain sovereignty over the whole of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.[26] Thus, Iranian officials claimed that Iraq's efforts to stir up racial and religious hatred not only among Iraqi and Iranian people but also among the wider Muslim world, together with Saddam Hussein's effort to depict the Iran-Iraq war as a confrontation between Arabs and Persians, were aimed at distorting the real character of the war. In the end, the Iranians argued, the Iran-Iraq war was no more and no less than a "struggle between imperialism and its agent and gendarme – Saddam Hussein – on the one side, and the people, both Iranian and Iraqi, Persian and Arab, on the other." (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 671, 673; A/37/PV.27, 1982: 518 and A/42/PV.6, 1987: 37)

In the Iranian analysis, Iraq would not have been able to launch an attack against the Islamic Republic without imperialistic powers' military assistance. Given that those powers did not want to become directly involved in the Iran-Iraq war,[27] Iran's officials maintained, arms transfers to the "mercenary Ba'thist regime" were the main instrument for the foreign players to boost Iraq's war effort. The Iranians referred to Iraq as a textbook example of a country – eager to put itself in the service of world imperialism – that had been encouraged by imperialists to acquire huge quantities of armaments and to pursue policies of domination and aggression. (A/C.1/35/PV.20, 1980: 43)

Moreover, Iranian officials pointed out that the war between Iran and Iraq provided arms manufacturing countries with a highly lucrative market for their products. In fact, they claimed that the imperialists of the East and West deliberately fuelled the war in

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[26] The officials of the Islamic Republic refer to Shatt al-Arab as the Arvand Rud.

[27] The Islamic Republic argued that the Vietnam war had demonstrated that the time for direct superpower involvement "in implementing imperialistic policies in the developing world" had passed. Instead, as the case of the Iran-Iraq war demonstrated, imperialists were using the services of dependent regional "gendarmes." (A/C.1/35.PV.20, 1980: 43)

order to sell weapons to Iraq and to other Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. As observed by Iran's foreign minister Ali Akbar Vilayati at the Conference on Disarmament in April 1985: "Even a simple-minded optimistic appraisal of the motives of some of the countries supporting Iraq would lead to the logical conclusion that they have secured their arms markets at the cost of creating and sustaining tensions of the worst kind in the [Persian Gulf] region." According to the Iranians, one technique used by imperialists to sell their weapons to Iraq and its Gulf Arab allies was to baselessly accuse the Islamic Republic of having committed criminal acts in the war and of having incited political unrest within the neighbouring Gulf countries. (CD/PV.308, 1985: 8 and A/36/PV.26, 1981: 112–113)

The officials of the Islamic Republic strongly condemned international arms transfers to Iraq and stressed that the sophisticated weaponry in Iraq's possession had caused considerable suffering among Iran's civilian population. Hence, for example, Iranian officials pointed out that Iraq had targeted Iranian civilians with disastrous consequences with missiles produced in the United States,[28] the Soviet Union,[29] and France.[30] These suppliers of "huge military and financial assistance" to Iraq – also excoriated as those who had armed the Iraqi regime to the teeth – were depicted by the Iranians as the real aggressors of the war, as those who had urged Iraq to continue fighting against the Islamic Republic. Furthermore, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that international arms transfers to Iraq and to other Gulf Arab states

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[28] The initial reaction of the United States to the Iran–Iraq war was one of disinterest, for both belligerents had a bad reputation in Washington. However, from 1982 onwards, in response to Iran's advances on the battlefield, the United States started to actively favour and support Iraq in the conflict. The reorientation of the U.S. policy resulted from the concern that Iraq's defeat would enable Tehran's radical government to subvert the oil-rich Arab sheikhdoms of the Gulf and threaten Israel and America's other Arab allies in the Middle East. The Americans also believed that Iraq's defeat could lead to increased Soviet influence in the Gulf. Although the United States had declared an arms embargo on both warring parties and thereby, contrary to Iran's accusations, refrained from direct arms sales to Saddam Hussein, U.S. armaments found their way to Iraq through third parties. Moreover, the Americans monitored third country arms sales to Iraq in order to make sure that the Iraqis had the weaponry they needed. Other forms of U.S. military support for the Iraqi war effort included the provision of high-value military intelligence and advice, economic aid, which freed up Iraqi money for arms purchases, and exports of high technology. (Pollack 2004: 182, 234, 206–208; Marschall 2003: 180 and Adib-Moghaddam 2007: 76–77)

[29] The Soviet Union was Iraq's primary weapons supplier during the war. At the beginning of the Iran–Iraq conflict, the Soviets pledged neutrality in the war and stopped direct arms shipments to Iraq. In 1982, as a result of Iran's refusal to end the war, however, the Soviet Union resumed its massive arms deliveries to Iraq. (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 103–104)

[30] French arms transfers to Iraq had started already in the 1970s. During the Iran–Iraq war, France acted as one of Saddam Hussein's main weapons suppliers. Of particular concern to the Iranians were the French deliveries to Iraq's air force. With the help of the Super Etendard and Mirage F-1 fighters in its use, and the Exocet anti-ship missiles and AS-30L bombs used in those planes, Iraq bombed military and

had intensified arms racing in the region and drained the economic resources of the region's Muslim people. Stressing that the money used for arms purchases could be used for non-military purposes, the Iranians expressed their hope to see the day when arms-manufacturing states would no longer consider the production and sales of armaments a profitable business and a tool to generate economic growth.[31]

In addition to expressly condemning the arms supplies of the United States, the Soviet Union, and France to Iraq (CD/PV.108, 1981: 12 and A/37/PV.27, 1982: 521), the authorities of the Islamic Republic forcefully disapproved all other forms of foreign assistance to the Iraqi war effort. Therefore, for example, Iran accused Gulf Arab sheikhdoms[32] of providing substantial financial aid to the Iraqi regime and blamed such Arab countries as Egypt and Jordan for their involvement in the war. Egypt was claimed by the Iranians to have provided the Iraqi army not only with war materiel but also with soldiers to fight against Iranian troops,[33] whereas Jordan was said to have acted as an important conduit through which arms intended for Iraq were shipped.[34] (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 113; A/40/PV.69, 1985: 91 and A/S-15/PV.19, 1988: 382–383, 385)

3.3.2 Warring Iran and international arms control

Against the backdrop of Iran's perception that it was being militarily confronted by an international front operating through Iraq and headed by world imperialism, it was clear that, during the Iran-Iraq war, global arms control issues were not among the Iranian leadership's highest priorities. Still, Iran used international arms control fora to voice its disapproval of the prevailing conditions in international relations which it defined as the ultimate reason for Iran's plight as an innocent victim of external aggression. A corollary of this Iranian argument was the claim that the Iran-Iraq war

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civilian targets in Iran as well as carried out missions against Iranian oil facilities and tankers in the Persian Gulf. (Menashri 1990: 290; Pollack 2004: 196–197, 206 and Marschall 2003: 77, 195)

[31] This paragraph draws upon A/C.1/35/PV.20 (1980: 43–45, 47–50); A/S-12/PV.3 (1982: 31); A/38/PV.13 (1983: 188); A/39/PV.15 (1984: 297) and A/40/PV.20 (1985: 61).

[32] Although all Gulf Arab sheikhdoms supported Iraq in its war against Iran, there were differing views among them about the severity of the threat posed by the Islamic Republic. While Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain were highly concerned over Iran's efforts to export its revolution to other Persian Gulf countries and over the spread of the war to their territory, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman – geographically more distant from the war front – had a less alarmist view and thereby better relations with Iran. (Marschall 2003: 62)

[33] Iran's accusations were true, for in addition to the fact that Egyptian workers living in Iraq were recruited to fight against Iran, Egypt sold armaments – such as small arms, ammunition, and anti-tank rockets – to warring Iraq (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 119, 135).

had proved, for its part, that international arms control deliberations were unable to bring about arrangements that would protect nations from the persistent peril of inter-state wars (CD/PV.404, 1987: 5). Frustrated by the constellations of the Iran-Iraq war, the officials of the Islamic Republic characterized the balance-sheet of international arms control as a record of consistent disappointments and called on the international community to take real arms control steps instead of organizing endless series of diplomatic meetings that only give empty promises. As the Iranian foreign minister Vilayati rhetorically asked: "How long will those [arms control] talks continue and how long should people wait [for tangible results]? God knows (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33)."[35]

Iran's view of the factors that were blocking progress in international arms control were summarized by Vilayati in his statement to the Conference on Disarmament in February 1986. The list he presented contained seven individual factors: (1) the arms race between the superpowers to gain larger spheres of influence in the world; (2) the efforts by the major powers to impose hegemonism on other states; (3) the efforts by the major powers to elevate arms racing in new dimensions; (4) the military manoeuvres and bases of the major powers in sensitive quarters of the world; (5) the major powers' efforts to fan up differences and border conflicts among Third World countries; (6) the suppressive policies of the major powers against Third World countries aiming to prevent developing countries from strengthening their independence and security and from making progress in various areas of societal life; and (7) the major power efforts to weaken the credibility of international organizations by exerting persistent influence on small countries.[36] (CD/PV.343, 1986: 343)

While, despite the on-going war, Iranian authorities continued to underscore the Islamic Republic's willingness to contribute to international arms control deliberations and not to abandon that field of diplomatic activity, they nevertheless pointed out that the poor state of international arms control could be altered only if international

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[34] Apart from acting as an important supply route for Iraq, Jordan provided volunteers, trained troops, and air bases as refuge for Saddam Hussein's military (ibid.: 74).

[35] For other similar Iranian pronouncements, see CD/PV.242 (1984: 8) and CD/PV.343 (1986: 7).

[36] Also note the following remark by Vilayati from June 1982: "Progress in such vital and delicate [international arms control] problems is impeded by differing opinions, procedural formalities, bureaucracy at the national and international level, the indifference of great powers, conflicts, competition and rivalries and the lack of confidence among the powers of the East and West, as a result of which the disarmament issue is deadlocked" (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 32). It is important to note here that, on occasion, both implicitly and explicitly, Iran's arms control officials made a certain qualification when discussing the problems of international arms control. This was the distinction made between the deeds of governments on the one hand and the deeds of ordinary people on the other. In the Iranian view, it was governments and power-seeking rulers, not ordinary people, who were responsible for the problems in arms control and world affairs in general. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 680)

relations underwent a fundamental change.[37] An international order free from power politics, mistrust, and rivalries was seen by the Iranians as a necessary prerequisite for progress in international arms control. According to them, the establishment of international peace and security had to be based on the principle of common and equal security for all nations (CD/PV.379, 1986: 6). Hence, Iranian representatives maintained that although the main responsibility for arms control laid with the two superpowers whose huge weapons arsenals threatened the whole world, bilateral arms control between the United States and the Soviet Union would not benefit the nations of the Third World if they continued to remain the objects of the superpowers' domineering policies (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45).

Iran's calls for change in international relations in general and in arms control diplomacy in particular included statements that brought Iranian authorities' ideological premises properly to the fore. The incorporation of the theme of cultural development in Iran's arms control argumentation was a case in point. The Iranians argued that success in international arms control was ultimately dependent on states' readiness to transform morally, for the international community was suffering from cultural poverty, "a grave moral crisis." As far as the linkage drawn by Iran between moral development and arms control was concerned, the June 1982 statement by the Islamic Republic's foreign minister to the UN General Assembly's second special session on disarmament was among the most articulate: "[Arms control] discussions, conferences and debates will attain the desired objectives only when the participants have the desire and determination in good faith to solve the difficulties, and this will not be possible unless morality, spirituality, perspicacity and international public opinion prevail." (A/37/PV.27, 1982: 516; A/38/PV.13, 1983: 186 and A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 32)

Resultantly, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that it was necessary for the international community to follow the example of the Iranian revolution and to adher to the teachings of the prophets.[38] As noted by Iran's president Ali Khamenei: "The prophets invited people to submit to God, because this crushes the feeling of egocentrism and superiority in man [...]. They persuaded man to control his

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[37] The Islamic Republic declared that it did not intend to give up its faith in international law and in international efforts in the area of arms control. Instead, Iran's representatives stressed, their country's intention was to point out that those efforts needed "a new soul." (CD/PV.130, 1981: 31 and A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33)

[38] The Iranians were of the opinion that the revolution in their country had partly been a consequence of the "inefficiency of the existing [social] systems in the world and the emptiness and falsehood of the slogans of democracy and equality in those systems" (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 26).

instinct of domination and superiority. They also warned against wasting human potential and slipping into the mire of moral corruption" (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 22).

In Iran's opinion, it was the countries of the oppressed world that had to take the initiative and lead the fight against imperialistic forces' efforts to obstruct progress in international arms control: "We are looking forward to the day when the United Nations [...] may free itself from the influential clutches of the superpowers [...] and succeed in contributing to international peace, security and disarmament. That day shall never come except through the unity of the oppressed and tyrannized nations of the world and their faith and reliance on God the Almighty in their struggles against oppression and world imperialism" (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 36).[39]

In the end, Iranian authorities stressed, the future of the nations of the oppressed world would depend on the outlook they would choose. In the words of president Khamenei: "Exploiting his intrinsic talents man can build the world created for him in the most beautiful ways and, flying on the two wings of faith and knowledge, rise to the highest spiritual and material peaks. Conversely, man can create a hell of oppression and corruption by going astray and wasting and perverting his God-given potential" (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 22). According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, it was a sacred duty for states to strive for an international system that was free from war and built on the principles of justice and equality.[40] They claimed that Iran had paved the way for the oppressed by strictly following the prophetic maxim "neither oppress nor let others oppress you." Iran's rejection of the Cold War international order, under which global security rested on the balance of power between two military blocs and not on the rule of law, the Iranian argument went, was a manifestation of the Islamic Republic's commitment and resolve. It was now the time for other states to take similar steps. (CD/PV.343, 1986: 7; A/42/PV.6, 1987: 23–25 and A/41/PV.19, 1986: 96)

In order to explain away the apparent contradiction between Iran's calls for arms control on moral grounds and the fact that the country was in war with Iraq, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that in the face of the international conspiracy aimed at destroying Iran's Islamic social order, Iranians had been left with no other choice than

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[39] Iranian authorities claimed that the policies of imperialistic powers based on careful studies of the history of the peoples of the world. According to them, imperialists focused on the peoples' weaknesses and fuelled conflicts among individual countries for the purpose of exploitation and domination. (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33)

[40] In the opinion of president Khamenei, surrender to the enemies of justice, virtuousness, and charity would only result in the destruction of those values and amount to acquiescence in evil, oppression, and corruption (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 23–25).

to take up arms. According to Iranian representatives, their country had made a number of friendly gestures to its neighbours immediately after the revolution in order to encourage the regional states to turn a new page in their relations and to commit themselves to arms control. The decisions taken by the Islamic Republic to withdraw from CENTO and to cancel the Shah government's orders of sophisticated conventional weaponry from Western suppliers were referred to as unambiguous diplomatic signals of post-revolutionary Iran's peaceful intentions and of its willingness to contribute to the ending of the regional arms race. However, Iranian officials told that the signals sent by their country had produced a disappointing response. In the words of one Iranian representative: "We never suspected that others were actually waiting to exploit the movement that had started in Iran towards demilitarization. What the Iranian people experienced was that good faith brought about foreign occupation and that, unfortunately, there was no way out except armed struggle." (A/C.1/35/PV.52, 1980: 97)

The Iranians thus maintained that external powers had compelled the Islamic Republic to stray from the path of arms control and rely on military force. After having pointed out that the defence of the Islamic Republic was not only a self-evident and legitimate right of the Iranian people but also a religious duty sanctioned by Islam,[41] Iranian officials made no effort to hide their country's war objectives. As Iran's military managed, in 1982, to effectively liberate all of the Iranian territority occupied by Iraq and gained an upper hand in the war, the officials of the Islamic Republic began to emphasize that the punishment of the aggressor and the toppling of Saddam Hussein were their country's main preoccupations in the war.[42] These war objectives were defined by Iranian officials as defensive, for according to the Iranians, the long-term security of the Islamic Republic and the Persian Gulf region could not be ensured unless the regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown. Iran's authorities argued that to give in to the "logic and adventurism of the oppressors" by making peace with Saddam Hussein would amount to inviting other parties to endanger the security of the Islamic Republic. In other words, the Iraqi government needed to be punished for the sake of deterring

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[41] For this point, see A/37/PV.41 (1982: 717); A/37/PV.96 (1982: 1592) and A/41/PV.19 (1986: 141–142). Hence, Iranian authorities often spoke of the Iran–Iraq war as a "sacred defence."

[42] In September 1982, Saudi Arabia had proposed a peace agreement between Iran and Iraq which would have included a payment of $70 billion in reparations to the Islamic Republic. Unlike Saddam Hussein, who had immediately accepted the Saudi proposal, the Iranians had rejected it. Later, the Islamic Republic rejected the peace calls made by the Saudis in bilateral talks with Iran in May 1985. The Saudis reportedly again offered money to Iran to stop the war. (Pollack 2004: 194 and Marschall 2003: 83)

Iraq and other actors from militarily challenging Iran again in the future. (A/37/PV.27. 1982: 518–519; A/40/PV.20, 1985: 63–65 and A/42/PV.6, 1987: 41)

In the Iranian argumentation, the theme of punishing the aggressor was inseperably linked with the notion of a just peace. The officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the Iranian definition of peace consisted of two equally important dimensions: first, of the absence of hostilities between the belligerents and, secondly, of the victim's agreement with the terms by which the hostilities were brought to an end – irrespective of whether such terms would please the aggressor or not. Iranian officials told that the Islamic Republic thought peace to be a beautiful word but found the word justice even more attractive. As a result, in its foreign policy, Iran would place greater priority on adherence to international principles based on justice than on bilateral relations with individual states. (A/40/PV.69, 1985: 89; A/41/PV.19, 1986: 109–110 and A/42/PV.6, 1987: 42)

From the Iranian perspective, then, the question of Iraq was something that had to be dealt with before any meaningful steps in strengthening regional security in the Persian Gulf could be taken. Iran's representatives also made it known that due to the war with Iraq, the Islamic Republic felt it was not able to contribute to international arms control as much as it would have wanted to.[43] Yet, Iranian authorities did not consider the war against Iraq to be a total hindrance to substantive participation in international arms control deliberations. Quite to the contrary, the Iranians believed that their country had a lot to contribute to the subject matter, not least because of an important quality it possessed: Islamic Iran's arms control views were based on real-life experiences, not on hypothetical intellectual constructs. Whereas previously Iranian officials had backed this argument by pointing to the experiences of the Iranian people with the policies of the Shah and his foreign supporters, now they supported it by alluding to Iran's experiences in the war (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 34–35 and A/40/PV.20, 1985: 56).[44] Due to

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[43] Note, for example, the following statement by foreign minister Vilayati at the Conference on Disarmament in August 1986: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a newly born system, has been faced with numerous problems and obstacles which have been imposed upon it, and consequently we have not been able to play a complete and decisive role in the realization of the objectives of the Conference (CD/PV.379, 1986: 3)." Moreover, the war was told by the Iranians to have made it more difficult for the Islamic Republic to execute other foreign policy objectives, such as supporting the "oppressed" of the world (A/40/PV.20, 1985: 71–72). During the initial stages of the Iran-Iraq war, though, the authorities of the Islamic Republic seemed to be more confident of their ability to pursue an active foreign policy outside the war context (see A/36/PV.26, 1981: 118–120 and A/37/PV.27, 1982: 517).

[44] Of course, in the Iranian analysis, the "imposed war" was a logical continuation of imperialistic powers' hostile policies towards Iran, and in this sense, the war did not fundamentally differ from those powers' antagonistic activities in the pre-war period.

the war and its negative implications, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, the people of Iran possessed special realism and urgency as far as the need for practical measures in the realm of international arms control was concerned (CD/PV.108, 1981: 13, 16).

At the same time, Iranian officials were careful to avoid implying that the Islamic Republic's arms control operations aimed at patching up Iran's military weaknesses on the battlefield. They claimed Iran to be capable of defeating Iraq militarily[45] and said that their government's diplomatic activities in the area of multilateral arms control were part of the Islamic Republic's determination to work for the goal of a just world order. The officials of the Islamic Republic also liked to assert that it was hard to find any other nation taking the issue of international peace and security as seriously as Iran. (A/C.1/35/PV.52, 1980: 96 and A/36/PV.26, 1981: 104–105)

Consequently, in the course of the war years, Iran's arms control officials regularly discussed issues that pertained to global control of conventional weaponry. They stressed that, in the opinion of Iran, portrayed as a major victim of conventional arms use herself, the international community had paid far too little attention to the quantitative and qualitative regulation of such weapons. The Iranians regretted the lack of international interest in conventional arms control and warned that the destructive power of conventional armaments had almost reached that of WMD. Also, the Iranians stressed that the production, technological sophistication, and diversity of conventional weapons had reached an alarming level. Hence, they called for strong and immediate measures in conventional arms control and called on the international community to give conventional arms control the same emphasis and status as to the control of WMD. So far, the representatives of the Islamic Republic concluded, international achievements in the realm of conventional arms control had remained very modest. (CD/PV.379, 1986: 3, 7; CD/PV.242, 1984: 11 and CD/PV.308, 1985: 7)

On the one hand, Iran's war-time argumentation on conventional arms control reflected the Iranian leadership's desire to profile the Islamic Republic's standing in international arms control diplomacy. Following the general thrust of the Islamic

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[45] In this connection, the Iranians often maintained that the Islamic Republic was morally superior to Iraq which meant that Iran would inevitably win the war. In war, Iran's officials noted, faith and self-sacrifice, not weapons, played the decisive role. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 674; CD/PV.108, 1981: 13 and A/42/PV.6, 1987: 43). Accordingly, the Iranians asserted that Iranian soldiers' eagerness for martyrdom neutralized the Iraqi advantage of easily acquiring sophisticated weaponry from both Western and Eastern bloc countries (CD/PV.379, 1986: 3). Yet, the Iranian assertions should not be interpreted as meaning that the

Republic's foreign policy, the efforts to build a distinct arms control identity for post-Pahlavi Iran included a strong universalist element: Iranian officials sought to portray the Islamic Republic as a defender and spokesman of the "oppressed" of the world. As a consequence, Iran continued its verbal attacks against the Cold War superpowers and their military policies. Iran's representatives asserted that in spite of paying lip service to the need for conventional arms control, the superpowers only focused on building up their military capabilities and imposed their arms racing on Third World nations by forcing developing countries to arm themselves as well (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 122 and CD/PV.343, 1986: 6–7).

Furthermore, the Iranians maintained that socialism and capitalism were at such an impasse that the Soviet Union and the United States had to exploit the countries of the Third World through arms trade in order to save their social orders from collapsing. Therefore, Iranian representatives argued, neither one of the superpowers hesitated to scare the countries of the Third World with intense propaganda campaigns and to lure them into procuring state-of-the-art conventional weaponry. The pressure put by the superpowers was told by the Iranians to be directed especially towards countries that were involved in armed conflicts or situated close to conflict theaters because the anxieties of such countries were easy to manipulate. From the Iranian point of view, arms shipments by the superpowers were also always motivated by the great power desire to politically dominate the Third World. Overall, then, Iran's strong diplomatic criticism of imperialistic arms policies markedly coloured warring Iran's arms control operations. The officials of the Islamic Republic crystallized this aspect of Iran's argumentation into a slogan according to which arms control was a process that contributed to decolonization, whereas arms racing was a symptom of colonialism. (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33; CD/PV.379, 1986: 5 and A/C.1/41/PV.24, 1986: 19–20)

Although the Islamic Republic enthusiastically voiced its views about conventional arms control and called for international steps in that area of multilateral diplomacy, it had very little to offer to the debate on concrete conventional arms control measures. Whether this resulted from the challenges and demands of the war against Iraq or from poor diplomatic capabilities, the fact remains that Iran's policy recommendations did not strike as having been founded on much of forethought. Quite the opposite, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic initiatives consisted of a set of general exhortations

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officials of the Islamic Republic overlooked or underestimated the importance of armaments in the war equation. Iran's arms control operations during the war were a clear indication to the contrary.

which, in the majority of the cases, were not elaborated on by Iranian officials. As a result, the singular Iranian proposals, such as the call for the establishment of zones free of conventional superpower weaponry (A/C.1/41.PV.24, 1986: 22) or for the adoption of a no-first-use of conventional weapons principle, a concept borrowed from the nuclear weapons debate, remained at the level of mere diplomatic remarks (CD/PV.379, 1986: 7).[46]

In a similar manner, Iran's allusions to the economic repercussions of arms racing lacked in-depth analyses. Even though the officials of the Islamic Republic persistently expressed their dissatisfaction, among others, with the fact that states' military budgets both in the developed and developing world kept on rising at a time when the people of the Third World suffered from the lack of food and education and other major social problems (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 31 and A/40/PV.20, 1985: 72), they did not provide any concrete roadmaps of how arms control measures could bring about changes in the prevailing conditions. Instead, the Iranians settled for making general calls for the sharp reduction of the world's military expenditures, the allocation of the resources reserved for military procurement to the economic and social development of the Third World, the control of the production of conventional weapons, the reorganization of international arms trade, and finally, the control of arms exports to the developing world. (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33–34; CD/PV.242, 1984: 12 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45)

While making such calls, Iranian officials saw to it that the Islamic Republic's views about its potential and actual allies in international arms control discussions were noticed. They let it be known that Iran identified itself diplomatically with the countries of the Third World and urged those states to refrain from buying armaments from the superpowers. Iran's arms control officials also stressed the importance of the Non-Aligned Movement's activities in the field of arms control, but demanded that the NAM should be "purged from the stooges of the superpowers." The Iranians noted that joint arms control efforts by developing and non-aligned countries were a necessity because the superpowers and their allies were blocking all progress in conventional arms control

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[46] Put into action, the idea of no-first-use of conventional weapons would mean that states would use conventional weapons only for defensive purposes, that is, only as a response to an armed attack. Given that the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic did not elaborate on what they meant by the no-first-use principle, many questions pertaining to the Iranian proposal remained unanswered. To give one example, the Iranians did not discuss what effects the adoption of such a principle would, or should, have on states' conventional weapons arsenals in quantitative or qualitative terms.

and rendering the arms control machinery of the UN impotent.[47] At the end of the day, the Iranians argued, countries that did not manufacture conventional weapons had to contribute to the creation of international arms control instruments dealing with this category of weaponry in order to strengthen their own national security. (A/37/PV.27, 1982: 520; A/38/PV.13, 1983: 181 and CD/PV.404, 1987: 4)

3.3.3 The question of Iraq's surface-to-surface missiles

In order to further Iran's security interests in the war against Iraq, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic sought to draw the attention of the international community to weapons issues that were of critical concern to Iranians but which they were not able to deal with militarily on the war front. One of such issues was Iraq's use of surface-to-surface missiles against military and civilian targets in Iran. Targeted by Iraqi SSM, Iranian authorities referred to SSM as a category of conventional weapons whose production and transfers should be immediately controlled by the international community (CD/PV.286, 1984: 26).

The use of SSM became part of Iraq's military operations soon after the war between the two countries had broken out. First Iraqi SSM were launched on 8 October 1980, and the target of these Soviet-supplied Frog-7 missiles was the Iranian city of Dizful (O'Ballance 1988: 38). Two days later, at the UN General Assembly, Iran strongly condemned Iraq's SSM attacks and accused the Iraqi regime of "fighting a dirty war of unprecedented cruelty and devastation." The Iranian representative addressing the General Assembly said that the Iraqi missiles had been deliberately and indiscriminately fired at residential areas, hospitals, and schools around midnight while people were asleep. According to him, a great section of Dizful had been destroyed by Iraq's missiles. In this connection, the Iranian representative also elaborated on Iran's own war policy. By referring to guidelines set by Ayatollah Khomeini himself, he pointed out that the Islamic Republic would never conduct military operations against innocent Iraqi civilians. This, the Iranian representative stressed, was an imperative based on the principles of Islam. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 674)

On 26 October 1980, Iraq launched its second series of SSM attacks against Iran. Again, the missiles were targeted at the Iranian city of Dizful and caused civilian

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[47] As put by Iranian officials, the superpowers had "disarmed the United Nations" (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 35).

casualties (O'Ballance 1988: 38). Iran expressed its anger about the strikes in the UN General Assembly's First Committee and accused Iraq of having relied on "barbaric and inhumane" methods of warfare. The Islamic Republic also asked what the responsibility of the countries supplying missiles to Iraq was for the lost Iranian lives and property. (A/C.1/35/PV.20, 1980: 44–45). During 1981–1982, Iraq launched altogether some 55 Frog-7 SSM against Iranian targets (Navias 1993: 133).[48] In addition, from 1982 onwards, Iraq began to deploy the Soviet-made Scud-B missile whose military effectiveness clearly exceeded that of the Frog-7 (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 496–497). The continuation of Iraq's missile strikes and Iran's inability to produce an effective military response – partly resulting from the fact that the Islamic Republic lacked a SSM force of its own – prompted Iranian arms control officials to toughen their rhetoric on international fora. While intensely criticizing Iraq's SSM attacks and referring to the human and material costs of those strikes, Iran's representatives also expressed their astonishment at the international community's silence over Iraq's "savage" methods of warfare (CD/PV.108, 1981: 12 and A/37/PV.27, 1982: 518). Moreover, they reiterated that the Islamic Republic was committed to a policy of limiting its war operations to Iraqi military positions (CD/PV.130, 1981: 31).

In 1983, the officials of the Islamic Republic stated that they had lost all their hope as far as the international community's intervention in Iraq's SSM use against Iranian civilian targets was concerned.[49] Henceforth, then, they pointed out, the only purpose of Iranian diplomatic statements on Iraqi missile strikes would be to provide information about the attacks so that the international community could have a "clearer picture of what is going on and understand why the Iranians feel that the only way to respond to this ruthless enemy is on the field of battle" (A/38/PV.13, 1983: 190). During 1984, Iran sought to realize this objective by listing and condemning the SSM attacks carried out by Iraq which totalled 27 that year (CD/PV.254, 1984: 32–33; A/39/PV.15, 1984: 297 and Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 525). In April 1985, at the Conference on Disarmament, Iran's foreign minister accused Iraq of having violated the moratorium between the two countries which had been agreed upon on 12 June 1984 through the mediation of the UN and under which both Iran and Iraq had promised not to shell or

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[48] In 1980, in total, Iraq had fired 10 Frog-7 missiles at Iran (Navias 1993: 133).

[49] According to Iranian officials, the international community's lack of interest in Iraq's war-time crimes resulted from the manipulations of the "oppressor superpowers" (A/38/PV.13, 1983: 190).

bomb each other's civilian areas.[50] Besides complaining about the Iraqi armed forces' contravention of the June 1984 moratorium, foreign minister Vilayati reminded the CD that Iraq had not paid any heed to the UN secretary-general's pleas for the cessation of military attacks on civilian and population centres which he had presented to both countries one month earlier.[51] (CD/PV.308, 1985: 8)

It was not thus unexpected that later in 1985, the tone of Iranian statements became more strict. Iran's officials pointed out that Iraq's contravention of the June 1984 moratorium and other war-time crimes had once again shown that the only effective way to counter Iraq was through the use of force. Iran's "limited retaliatory actions" were said to have been the only factor which had made the Iraqi regime reduce its missile attacks against Iranian civilian targets (A/40/PV.20, 1985: 58–60). In fact, by the time Iran made these points, it had been able to create a SSM force of its own. Iran fired its first Scud-B missiles in March 1985 (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 497) and it continued to strike Iraqi targets, both military and civilian, throughout the rest of the war.[52] Iran acquired its SSM with the help of China, North Korea, Libya, and Syria, in addition to which the Islamic Republic bought them from the open market (Ehteshami 2000a: 150).

After Iran had attained the ability to hit Iraq with its own SSM, the Islamic Republic's missile-related statements concentrated on legitimizing the Iranian strikes. The earlier remarks about Iran's military restraint were thus quietly sidelined. The officials of the Islamic Republic continued to refer to Iraq's attacks against Iranian civilian targets[53] – characterized by the Iranians, among others, as war crimes defying all norms of international law – and emphasized that Iran had been left with no other choice than to retaliate in kind (A/41/PV.19, 1986: 102). Without the Islamic Republic's SSM reprisals, the Iranian argument went, nothing would have deterred Iraq from launching additional missiles. In this sense, then, Iran's arms control officials defined the Islamic Republic's missile strikes as purely defensive and, following an already

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[50] The first time Iran had accused Iraq of having contravened the June 1984 moratorium had already been in December 1984 (O'Ballance 1988: 154).

[51] For the UN secretary-general's appeals of March 1985 regarding the implementation of the June 1984 moratorium, see <http://www.un.int/iran/res/doc10.html> and <http://www.un.int/iran/res/doc11.html>.

[52] Iran launched some 14 Scud-B missiles against Iraqi targets in 1985, 8 in 1986, 18 in 1987, and 77 in 1988 (Navias 1993: 133).

[53] It is estimated that Iraq's war-time missile attacks on Iranian cities killed in all some 2,000 people (Tarzi 2004: 97). In addition, Iraq's missile strikes had a significant terrorizing effect on the Iranian people. The fear that Iraq would load chemical warheads on its SSM naturally added to the terror effect.

familiar argumentative guideline, sought to portray Iran as a victim of the policies of the immoral and inhumane Iraqi regime.

As the intermittent SSM exchanges of 1986 and 1987 transformed into a 52-day period of full-blown missile war in 1988 – the most intensive phase of the so-called war of the cities during which an estimated total number of 264 SSM were fired (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 502) – Iran's officials emphasized again that the missile attacks by the Islamic Republic were manifestations of its right to respond to Iraq's SSM aggressions. As one Iranian diplomat put it in April 1988: " […] our attacks have only a deterrent aspect. We did not start the 'war of the cities,' we will not continue the 'war of the cities' […]. […] whenever Iraq stops attacks on cities, the Islamic Republic of Iran will stop" (CD/PV.456, 1988: 7). Apart from asserting Iran's innocence in the intensification of the missile exchanges between the warring parties in 1988, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic wanted to signal to Iraq and to the countries supporting it that Iraq's SSM attacks would not affect the course of the war but only increase Iran's resolve to continue the battle against the regime of Saddam Hussein (CD/PV.445, 1988: 8).

3.3.4 Maritime security in the Persian Gulf

Another war-time issue that caused considerable concern among the Iranian leadership and was regularly raised internationally by the Islamic Republic's arms control officials was the maritime security situation in the Persian Gulf. Due to the waterway's fundamental importance to Iran's national and economic security, let alone for the Islamic Republic's ability to wage the war against Iraq in the first place, the question of maritime security in the Gulf occupied the minds of Iranian decision-makers right from the outset of the Iran-Iraq conflict. As the war aggravated foreign powers' concerns about the freedom and safety of navigation in the Persian Gulf and subsequently brought about an increased superpower naval presence in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean,[54] the Islamic Republic stepped up its criticism of the superpowers' military moves in the region.

In the opinion of Iranian authorities, both superpowers, but the United States in particular, used the Iran-Iraq war as a pretext under which they dispatched naval units in

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[54] For the naval presence of the superpowers in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean during the initial phases of the Iran–Iraq war, see El-Shazly (1998: 146–151).

the Gulf and the Indian Ocean (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 116). The representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that the dispatches pointedly illustrated that the United States and the Soviet Union based their foreign policies on a conception of racial superiority among nations. According to the Iranians, the feeling of racial superiority explained not only the superpowers' shameless intrusion into the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, but also their arrogant contention that they had vital national interests to protect in the region. (A/38/PV.13, 1983: 192). Moreover, Iran's arms control officials expressed their disapproval of the regional states' support for the superpowers' naval operations. For example, Oman, which had allowed the U.S. navy to control the Masirah island base in return for military aid (El-Shazly 1998: 146–147), was strongly condemned by the Iranians for placing military bases at the disposal of the "world-devouring imperialism of America." (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 123 and A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 36)

Regularly, then, the representatives of the Islamic Republic made it known that they strongly opposed the efforts of foreign governments to project naval power in the Persian Gulf and act as "policemen" for the region. In their view, the security of the waterway had to be safeguarded exclusively by the regional states. (A/35/PV.33, 1980: 673). Foreign naval presence in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean "for the protection of imperialistic interests" was defined by the Iranians as a factor that undermined the political tranquility and stability of the region. On this basis, the leadership of the Islamic Republic demanded that the superpowers should end their military presence in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, stop interfering in the affairs of the region, and close down all naval and other military bases they had in the area. (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 124–125 and A/37/PV.27, 1982: 519). The officials of the Islamic Republic consistently supported – as the Iranian government under the Shah had done – the Indian Ocean zone of peace initiative at the UN (A/37/PV.27, 1982: 519), and more ambitiously, insisted on the elimination of great power military presence and rivalries from all other regions of the world as well (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 36).

In spite of its calls for naval arms control and for joint regional efforts to guarantee the security of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, however, warring Iran reserved itself the right to take unilateral military steps if necessary. Due to the importance of the Gulf to their country, Iranian arms control officials argued, the Islamic Republic was entitled to control that strategically vital waterway: "The Islamic Republic [...] is responsible for the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and will sharply oppose any measure that disturbs the security and traquility of the area and creates obstacles for the

passage of ships and marine transportation, and will with all its might ensure the security of that waterway on the basis of international laws and regulations" (ibid.).

Accordingly, Iran notified the international community that it would firmly deal with any conspiracy or act of aggression directed against the Iranian revolution or the country's Islamic regime. Iran made it also clear that it would promptly react to any action aimed at endangering Iran's vital interests in the Gulf. If Iran's interests were put into jeopardy, the representatives of the Islamic Republic threatened, it would result in complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the entrance point to the Persian Gulf, and the stoppage of the flow of oil from the region. Furthermore, Iranian officials stressed that the Islamic Republic would not tolerate arms shipments to Iraq through the strait. Notwithstanding their tough language and warnings, however, Iranian representatives simultaneously assured that their country would carry out its threats only in extreme circumstances. Therefore, the regional states would not need to worry about Iran's intentions in the Gulf which, the Iranians stressed, were entirely defensive. The Islamic Republic was also told to be willing to establish close and friendly relations with its littoral neighbours on the Arab side of the Gulf. Those who claimed the opposite and portrayed the Islamic Republic as an evil actor, the Iranians argued, were the same foreign powers that supported Iraq's war efforts and sought to justify their military presence in the region. (A/37/PV.27, 1982: 519 and A/38/PV.13, 1983: 190)

The mixture of threats, assurances, and calls for arms control characterized Iran's Gulf-related statements even after the start of the so-called tanker war in the Iran-Iraq conflict in 1984. The tanker war was a direct result of Iraq's conclusion that after four years of fighting against Iran, its military would not be able to achieve a decisive breakthrough on the battlefield. Therefore, in order to weaken Iran's economy and to internationalize the Iran-Iraq war, and thereby force Iran to end the hostilities and to sit down at the negotiating table, Iraq took advantage of its airpower superiority and started to hit economic targets that were vital for the Islamic Republic's ability to fight the war, such as tankers that carried Iranian oil through the Gulf, oil refineries, and Iranian oil-export terminals. (El-Shazly 1998: 1)

The Iranian leadership was well aware of Iraq's objectives. But according to Iranian officials, Iraq's attacks on commercial shipping in the Gulf were a desperate attempt to ignore the fact that the tide of the war had turned in favour of the Islamic Republic. The Iraqi strikes were said by the Iranians to have only caused tension throughout the region, endangered international peace and security, and put the stability of the world

economy at risk. (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 297 and A/40/PV.20, 1985: 63–65). Iran's response to the Iraqi actions was composed of a diplomatic and military component. Iran regularly condemned Iraq's operations in international diplomatic fora and asked why the UN allowed Iraq to violate international law by targeting vessels belonging to non-belligerent countries in the Gulf. In the Iranian officials' view, the world organization's indifference in the matter encouraged Iraq to continue its unlawful attacks. (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 296–297)

Militarily, Iran opted for retaliating against Iraq by harassing and attacking the shipping of Iraq's main financial and logistical supporters, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[55] Iran's decision to target Iraq's Gulf allies was a consequence of the fact that by the time of the tanker war's start in 1984, Iraq no longer exported oil by sea through the Gulf. For this reason, Iran – whose navy had dominated the Iran-Iraq conflict's naval theater right from the beginning of the war – was forced to retaliate against maritime traffic that indirectly benefited Iraq. During the tanker war, the Islamic Republic threatened its Gulf Arab neighbours on a continuous basis and referred to unspecified dire consequences should they continue to contribute to the Iraqi war effort. Iranian authorities also reminded their Arab neighbours of the Iranian position according to which Saddam Hussein's regime had to be toppled and punished for the sake of a lasting peace in the Gulf.

Intermittently, when the fluctuating war-time relations between Iran and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms were undergoing a warmer period, though, the Islamic Republic flirted with them by emphasizing the need for strong and friendly relations among the littoral states of the Persian Gulf.[56] In 1986, as part of Iran's efforts to drive a diplomatic wedge between Iraq and other Gulf Arab states and to get foreign military forces out of the region, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed that all littoral states of the Gulf had to explore the possibilities that were available for making arrangements for the establishment of a durable and permanent peace in the region. Iranian officials proposed the establishment of an indigenous Gulf security arrangement that would be built on five fundamental conditions: absolute respect for the regional states' sovereignty, the regional states' political independence and territorial integrity,

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[55] In the period of 1980–1988, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, both highly fearful of the Islamic Republic's radical ideology and military intentions, financed the Iraqi war effort with an average of $500 million per month (Mofid 1990: 369).

[56] The amalgam of tough and soft tones in Iran's diplomatic language vis-á-vis Gulf Arab countries is well represented in A/41/PV.19 (1986: 111).

the principle of non-intervention in the regional states' internal affairs, and lastly, extra-regional states' neutrality with regard to the Iran-Iraq war.[57] (S/18376, 1986: 12)

Naturally, foreign powers, who were increasingly worried about the developments in the Gulf, continued to get their share of the Islamic Republic's verbal attacks. This was the case especially after 1987 when the U.S.-led Western naval intervention in the Gulf to protect Kuwaiti and Saudi oil exports took place.[58] In the Iranian opinion, the foreign naval presence in the Gulf was a manifestation of outside powers' eagerness to safeguard their interests in the region without bothering to take into account the interests of the Gulf countries themselves (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 56). Not unexpectedly, Iran's diplomatic criticism was mainly targeted at the United States or the "arch-Satan," to borrow the epithet used by the Iranian authorities. According to Iran's arms control officials – who feared that the U.S. intervention in the Gulf was designed to pressure Iran to stop the fighting and to impose a cease-fire favouring Iraq, and who were not sure whether the Americans had even more vicious military intensions vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic[59] –, the naval presence of the United States seriously undermined the security situation in the region. As argued by foreign minister Vilayati at the UN General Assembly's third special session on disarmament in June 1988: "The military forces of the United States and its allies [...] invaded the Persian Gulf and, under the guise of maintaining the security of this international waterway, caused its increasing instability. In less than a year since the dispatch of foreign forces to the Persian Gulf, there has not been a single day without an incident [...]" (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 48–49).

Iranian authorities used the naval incidents in the Gulf – especially the U.S. strikes at Iran's naval and oil installations – as examples of America's hostility towards Iranians and of outside powers' imperialistic aspirations to dominate the region (A/42/PV.6, 1987: 51, 56). To block these alleged ambitions, the officials of the Islamic Republic voiced Iran's categorical rejection of the superpower rivalry and domination efforts in the Persian Gulf (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 49). They pointed out that there was an urgent need for naval arms control measures in the Gulf and called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign naval forces from the region.[60] Iran's calls were

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[57] Iran tried to promote the idea of an indigenous Gulf security arrangement also in 1987 and 1988 through bilateral consultations with the Gulf Arab governments (Marschall 2003: 93).

[58] Responding to Kuwait's request for the protection of its tankers, also the Soviet Union dispatched a naval force in the Gulf in 1987.

[59] For a discussion of these Iranian fears, see Ramazani (1990b: 38) and McNaugher (1989: 179).

[60] In the course of 1987–1988, naval units from the following extra-regional states were dispatched in the Gulf: the United States (29 warships in 1987 and 32 in 1988), the United Kingdom (18/8), the Soviet

supported by statements which concluded that, due to the heavy foreign naval presence in the Gulf that aimed at humiliating and imposing pressure on the littoral states, the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean was more important than ever.[61] (A/C.1/42/PV.44, 1987: 46)

The Islamic Republic's Gulf-related deliberations based on the core premise or belief that regional arrangements free from the influence of the East and the West were the best way of ensuring security in the region. Iranian authorities pointed out that the Islamic Republic itself was ready to contribute to the establishment of an indigenous regional security system and that Iran had already called for concrete steps to be taken in that direction. In the opinion of the Islamic Republic, and this was made clear on a number of occasions, the dismantling of all foreign military bases and the elimination of foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf constituted the fundamental first step in any regional security framework. In addition, the Iranians continued, if such an arrangement was to materialize, all the regional states should be internationally assured against both intra- and extra-regional acts or threats of aggression. To present the Islamic Republic's intentions in a good light, Iranian officials said that their country had been willing to participate in international mine-sweeping operations in the Gulf but that Iran's offers had been rejected by the "proponents of tension in the region and particularly by Iraq, which is responsible for mining the Persian Gulf." (CD/PV.404, 1987: 5 A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 49)

What the Iranians were less enthusiastic to elaborate upon was the military operations of their own naval forces in the maritime theater of the Iran-Iraq conflict. Even after the arrival of the foreign armada to the Gulf in 1987, Iran continued to retaliate against Iraq's tanker strikes by harassing and attacking third party vessels. Eventually, such actions brought the Iranian navy into direct conflict with foreign naval forces in the Gulf and particularly with those of the United States. The naval clashes between the Islamic Republic and the United States in the course of 1987–1988 constituted a heavy blow not only to the Iranian navy but also to the country's war morale in general.[62] Consequently, the negative repercussions of the tanker war partially contributed to the fact that the

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Union (15/8), France (14/7), Italy (8/6), Belgium (4/2), and the Netherlands (4/2) (El-Shazly 1998: 239, 256).

[61] In this connection, Iran's representatives also criticized the UN for its inability to deliver tangible results in the field of naval arms control. The Iranians argued, among others, that the world organization had done nothing to condemn the presence and actions of foreign naval forces in the Persian Gulf (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 49).

leadership of the Islamic Republic finally decided to abandon its unbending war policy and, on 18 July 1988, announced its unconditional acceptance of the UN Security Council resolution 598 which established a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war.[63] The cease-fire took effect a month later, on 20 August 1988.

3.4 The Islamic Republic's Post-War Rearmament Program[64]

Iran's decision to end the war with Iraq was in many ways a bitter and a humiliating experience for the authorities of the Islamic Republic. For years, they had asked the Iranian people to bear the enormous personal and societal costs of the war, the continuation of which was declared to be essential for the sake of the revolution and Islam. And yet, in the end, the Islamic Republic's main war objectives during 1982–1988 never materialized: Iran was neither able to punish the Iraqi leadership for the initiation of the Iran-Iraq war and nor was it capable of exporting its revolution to Iraq by overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein. Instead, by all accounts, the eight-year war with Iraq left a disastrous legacy to the Iranian nation. Most strikingly, an estimated 450,000–730,000 Iranians, including both combatants and civilians, were killed as a result of the conflict, in addition to which some 600,000–1,200,000 Iranians were wounded in the course of the war (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 3).[65] The economic costs of the Iran-Iraq conflict were equally dramatic. According to one estimate, the grand total economic costs of the conflict to both warring parties were as huge as $1,097 billion, of which the Islamic Republic's share alone accounted for $644.3 billion (Mofid 1990: 368).[66]

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[62] For the tanker war clashes between Iran and the United States, see El-Shazly (1998: 299, 353–356) and Ramazani (1990b: 41–44, 50).

[63] By agreeing to discontinue all military actions related to the war, as demanded in the Security Council's resolution, Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire effectively amounted to a unilateral arms control measure.

[64] This section deals with Iran's conventional weapons programs. The Islamic Republic's post-war interest in WMD will be discussed in chapter 6. Given that the question of Iran's SSM has been linked, first and foremost, to the diplomatic and scholarly debate on the Islamic Republic's WMD – and especially nuclear weapons – ambitions, Iran's rearmament efforts in the SSM sphere will be discussed separately in chapter 5. This, of course, is not to suggest that SSM have not played an important role in Iran's conventional weapons arsenal.

[65] The respective rough estimates for Iraqi casualties are 150,000–340,000 killed and 400,000–700,000 wounded (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 3). According to official Iranian sources, some 205,000 Iranians – including both combatants and civilians – lost their lives in the Iran-Iraq war (*IRNA,* 23 September 2000).

[66] These figures mean that in 1980–1988, on average each year, 60 percent of Iran's and 111 percent of Iraq's GNP went to war-related costs (Mofid 1990: 368).

The human and material costs of war, together with the conflict's domestic political ramifications, largely explained why the Iranian leadership ultimately recognized that ending the war was in the Islamic Republic's interest. The Iranian leadership's fear that the hardships and the war-weariness of the Iranian people would turn the nation against the Islamic regime was a major factor contributing to Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire. Iraq's military advances on the battlefront during 1988, the naval intervention of the United States in the Gulf in 1987, together with the diplomatic pressure put on the Islamic Republic from various directions, were also partly responsible for the Iranian leadership's eventual – and, indeed, for many a surprising – decision to disengage the country from the long-lived conflict. (Ramazani 1990b: 49–52 and Moin 1999: 267–269)

After the Islamic Republic had unconditionally accepted the UN Security Council Resolution 598, Iran's leadership immediately began to justify the decision to the domestic audience in Iran. In this process, three main arguments were put forth. First, Iranian authorities emphasized that the war had not mattered that much to the Islamic Republic after all. Whereas in the course of the conflict Iran's leaders had presented the Iran-Iraq war as an inevitable and a necessary struggle against the international conspirators responsible for the conflict and as a boon to the vitality of Iran's Islamic system, now they maintained that the conflict had become a strain on the execution of the Iranian revolution's goals and ideals. Of course, the leaders of the Islamic Republic stressed, Iran would continue its battle against the forces of evil but, from now on, the fight would take place outside the burdensome war context. (Gieling 1999: 169)

Iranian authorities' argumentative U-turn was further evident in the statements that referred to the history of Islam and drew a parallel between the Islamic Republic's acceptance of the cease-fire and the actions of Prophet Muhammad. Pointing to the so-called treaty of Hubaidiya concluded between the Prophet and the pagan Meccans in 628, Iran's leaders argued that the Prophet himself had viewed peace with an enemy as a wise strategic move. The fact that Ayatollah Khomeini had personally blessed the cease-fire decision was used as the third principal argument to justify Iran's desire to end the war. By presenting the acceptance of the Security Council Resolution 598 as Khomeini's personal decision, Iranian authorities tried to convince the Iranian people that the supreme leader's acceptance of the cease-fire testified to a far-sighted strategy based on divine inspiration. (Ibid.: 166, 169–170)

Iranian authorities' attempts to shift the Iranian people's attention from the war experience to the post-war era were not solely part of the regime's face-saving efforts but also a reflection of the fact that the Iranian government was faced with a task of huge proportions, namely the country's post-war reconstruction. In the area of foreign policy, the imperative of reconstruction brought the issue of Iran's relations with the rest of the world to the fore. On the one hand, the leaders of the Islamic Republic had to rethink and revise their foreign policy priorities and to formulate a diplomatic course that would directly benefit their reconstruction efforts. In practice, this meant that the Islamic Republic had to improve its relations with foreign governments at the expense of its ideological objectives. On the other hand, Iran's leaders had to focus on ensuring that on the threshold of the post-war era, the country's national security would not be threatened. Otherwise, the reconstruction efforts would not stand a chance of success. Soon after the end of the war, thus, the Islamic Republic started to rearm and modernize its armed forces.

When the war between Iran and Iraq broke out in September 1980, the Iranian military was undergoing a period of major internal tumult. The chaos within the armed forces resulted from the general upheaval within the Iranian society as well as from the steps taken by the power-holders of the newly established Islamic Republic to systematically purge the military from elements loyal to the monarchy and other political tendencies regarded as a threat to the new regime. At first, the purges in the military concerned those high-ranking officers of the armed forces that had been closely identified with the policies of the Shah's regime. Later, the authorities of the Islamic Republic targeted the elements of the military personnel that could not convince the Iranian leadership of their loyalty or, more seriously, had directly taken part in the coup attempts made in the country in the course of 1980.[67]

In spite of the demands of some revolutionary forces in Iran, the leftist groups in particular, that Iran's armed forces – commonly regarded as a symbol of the ousted Shah's reign – should be replaced with a people's army, the leadership of the Islamic Republic ultimately decided not to dismantle Iran's regular armed forces. There were three main reasons for this. First, the Soviet invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan in

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[67] The military personnel targeted by the Islamic Republic's authorities faced execution, imprisonment, and other forms of punishment such as domestic exile and forced retirement. For a detailed discussion of the purge and the punishment of Iranian military personnel after the 1979 revolution, as well as of the coup attempts of 1980 in which some active and retired members of the officer corps were involved, see Zabih (1988: 115–130) and Schahgaldian (1987: 17–27).

December 1979 and Iran's mounting tensions with Iraq illustrated that the Islamic Republic needed a professional military to protect itself against external threats. Secondly, the ethnic-separatist and tribal uprisings that took place across Iran following the revolution demanded the Islamic regime to retain the country's military functional.[68] The third factor contributing to the regular armed forces' survival was the fact that the decision-makers of the Islamic Republic had conflicting views about the future of the country's military establishment. Thanks to those among the political elite who spoke for the co-optation of the regular armed forces to the structures of the Islamic Republic, the regular military managed to survive. (Hunter 1992: 47)

In the end, it was the commencement of the Iran-Iraq war that kept Iran's regular armed forces existentially afloat. After the hostilities between the two neighbours had broken out, the leaders of the Islamic Republic reviewed their policy vis-á-vis the country's military establishment. As a result, they brought the wave of purge and punishment to a halt and declared their intention to instead fully Islamize the Iranian military (Zabih 1988: 128).[69] But while the regular armed forces bore the main responsibility for war operations against Iraq's troops, Iran's Islamic leadership remained highly suspicious of the military establishment's depth of commitment and of its loyalty to the country's new regime. These suspicions led the leaders of the Islamic Republic to strengthen the role of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in Iran's military scene. Initially, after the revolution, the IRGC had been established to counterbalance the regular armed forces by internally defending the revolution.

The status of Iran's regular armed forces was further undermined by Iranian leaders' undervaluation of the importance of training, expertise, formal organization, and technology in the war equation. The political elite of the Islamic Republic believed that ideology, fervor, and commitment could be translated into tangible and powerful military assets. As far as arms procurement and equipment maintenance were concerned, this belief produced major practical difficulties for warring Iran's military forces. For example, the Iranian leadership's decision after the revolution to cancel $11 billion in arms on order from the United States proved to be short-sighted, for later in the course of the war against Iraq, the Islamic Republic had to spend huge amounts of

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[68] In the aftermath of the revolution, all Iranian ethnic minority groups, save Azari-Turks, demanded autonomy for themselves. However, the leadership of the Islamic Republic portrayed such demands as an imperialist plot and crushed any challenge to the central government in Tehran militarily. (Menashri 1990: 14)

[69] For the Islamization efforts in practice, see Zabih (1988: 136–161).

money to find spare parts and replacements on the black market for the U.S. weaponry in Iran's arsenal. (Chubin 1997a: 230)

The confrontational nature of Islamic Iran's foreign policy was another factor that detrimentally affected Iran's war-time arms procurement efforts. As a result of the seizure of U.S. diplomats as hostages in November 1979 and the major diplomatic crisis between the Islamic Republic and the United States that ensued, Iran practically lost its access to Western armaments and had to desperately find alternative weapons sources. Consequently, during the war years, Iran imported most of its arms from China, North Korea, the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites, as well as from a number of developing countries in Asia and Latin America. In terms of conversion and integration, the inflow of military hardware from a wide variety of states – by the end of the war, the Islamic Republic had received weapons supplies from more than twenty different sources – posed remarkable challenges to Iran's armed forces. And yet in the end, those imports did not manage to alleviate the equipment deficiencies – particularly in the spheres of armor as well as naval and air warfare – that had resulted from Iran's inaccessibility to Western and especially U.S. hardware. (Cordesman 1993: 398–401 and Chubin 1994: 18–19)

3.4.1 Iran's foreign weapons sources

After the hostilities between Iran and Iraq terminated in 1988, the leadership of the Islamic Republic embarked upon a reconstruction strategy composed of three major elements: economic development, opening to the outside world, and rearmament of Iran's armed forces. Although the general thrust of the reconstruction strategy received wide support within the Islamic Republic's political elite, there were differing views among the elite of the relative importance of each of the strategy's three elements. Thus, for example, there were elite voices that called for the reduction of military expenditures and the number of men serving in the country's armed forces. Because of the lack of progress in the peace negotiations between the Islamic Republic and Iraq, and due to Iran's volatile security environment and the Iranian leadership's desire not to anger the country's military establishment, however, those suggestions did not materialize. Moreover, the mere fact that Iran had lost some 40–60 percent of its major land-force weaponry during the final stages of the war in the spring and summer of 1988 made the

rearmament program a necessity. (Hashim 1995: 50; Hunter 1992: 54 and Cordesman 2000a: 2)

The Islamic Republic's post-war rearmament efforts based on a number internal evaluations that had been conducted in 1988 and 1989 regarding the war-time performance of the various wings of the Iranian armed forces. One of the lessons drawn by the Iranians from the war was that their vulnerability to international diplomatic measures blocking Iran's access to the international arms market had to be significantly reduced. Iranian authorities concluded that the impact of such arms control measures would be best eliminated through the establishment of diverse and reliable sources of weapons supply, the stockpiling of large amounts of armaments and spare parts in case there would be critical interruptions in the supply chain, and the enhancement of domestic arms production in Iran. (Ehteshami 1993: 76 and Chubin 1994: 18)

As the Islamic Republic's access to the badly needed Western-made weapons systems continued to be highly limited even after the end of the war, Iran's post-war rearmament efforts focused on arms deals with the same principal suppliers that had shipped armaments to Iran during the war period. The first major sign of Iran's intention to rebuild and at the same time modernize the country's weapons inventory was the agreement signed between the Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union in the summer of 1989 during Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani's visit to Moscow. In this arms and military assistance agreement, which formed a part of a more comprehensive $15 billion trade and investment deal between the two countries, the Soviet Union pledged to provide Iran with modern advanced weapons systems, including MiG-29 fighters, T-72 main battle tanks, air-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft missile systems, and air defence radar systems. (Ehteshami 1994: 33–34)

Subsequently, the Islamic Republic continued to import various types of modern conventional weaponry from Russian manufacturers. By turning to Russia, the Islamic Republic tried to get hold of the kind of advanced weaponry it had not been able procure from Western producers because of the political obstacles involved. In addition to the weapons systems mentioned above, Iran's post-war arms imports from Russia included BMP-1, BMP-2, and other armored infantry fighting vehicles, possibly large numbers of M-46 and D-30 artillery weapons, AT-2, AT-3, and AT-4 anti-tank guided missile launchers, Su-24 fighters, Mi-17 support and utility helicopters, SA-6 and SA-5 air-defence systems, three Kilo-class submarines, advanced torpedoes, as well as modern anti-ship mines. (Cordesman 2000a: 70–71 and Eisenstadt 1996: 37)

Arms acquisitions from China also played a central role in Iran's post-war rearmament program. While during the Iran-Iraq conflict the Islamic Republic had used China mainly as a source for low-quality replacements and ammunitions, Iran's post-war procurements from the Chinese focused on more advanced weaponry, such as Type-69 tanks, 146mm self-propelled weapons, Type-63 107mm multiple-rocket launchers, F-7M fighters, HQ-2B surface-to-air missile batteries, Houdong-class missile patrol boats, C-802 and C-801K anti-ship missiles, HY-2 coastal missiles, and EM-52 rocket-propelled sea-mines. Russia and China aside, the Islamic Republic sought to procure advanced conventional weaponry from a number of other countries as well. For example, Iran imported T-72 tanks from Poland, 146mm self-propelled weapons from North Korea, and trainer fighters from Brazil and Pakistan. In addition, Iranian officials approached various producers in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America in order to purchase modern weapons technology. By using the channels established in the course of the war, Iran also continued its attempts to smuggle in arms from a number of Western countries. (Cordesman 1999a: 63–65, 68; Eisenstadt 1996: 37 and Oren 2000: 93)

3.4.2 The volume and the quality of Iran's arms imports

Quantitatively, the trend of the Islamic Republic's post-war arms imports was a steadily decreasing one. During the 1987–1990 period, covering the two final years of the war and the first two years of the post-war era, the total value of Iran's new weapons agreements was about $10.3 billion. Of this sum, purchases from Russia constituted an estimated $2.5 billion and acquisitions from China about $3.4 billion. Iran's European arms imports totalled some $2.3 billion, of which Eastern European hardware made up the most part. Iran did manage to acquire some equipment from Western European producers, such as Italian and German support and utility helicopters, but these purchases totalled a modest sum of $200 million. The Islamic Republic's arms imports from other countries during the 1987–1990 period totalled some $2.1 billion, North Korea being the main weapons source in this category. (Cordesman 1999a: 62, 65)

Between 1991 and 1994, Iran's new arms deals totalled only about $4.8 billion. Iran's most important supplier in 1991–1994 was Russia with whom the Islamic Republic signed some $1.2 billion worth of agreements, whereas the value of arms imports from China decreased to about $400 million. Other trading partners of Iran during this period

included arms producers from Eastern Europe and North Korea. In the course of the next four years, in 1995–1998, the total value of the Islamic Republic's new arms agreements continued to drop. Iran's arms expenditures amounted to an estimated $1.4 billion, of which orders from China accounted for about a half. Russia's share of Iran's arms purchases decreased significantly during this period, to some $200 million. The remaining Iranian agreements in 1995–1998 were signed mainly with North Korea and Eastern European arms producers. (Ibid.: 62; Cordesman 1999b: 84 and Cordesman 2000a: 21)

From a qualitative point of view, the Islamic Republic's post-war arms imports were not able to alleviate the major weaknesses in Iran's conventional weapons arsenal. In the first place, the combination of the fact that Iran still remained heavily dependent on Western-made weapons systems and the fact that Islamic Republic continued to face serious difficulties in obtaining equipment, spare parts, and ammunition from Western sources posed a considerable problem for the Iranian armed forces. A large part of the Western – mainly U.S. – armaments in Iran's arsenal were becoming helplessly obsolete, which further complicated Iranian military planning and underscored the need for maintaining good relations with the suppliers that were ready to do business with the Islamic Republic. To make things worse for Iranian authorities, however, Western governments actively tried to block transfers of sophisticated conventional weaponry to the Islamic Republic. Thus, for example, the decrease in arms deals between Iran and Russia during 1995–1998 found a partial explanation in the pressure the U.S. government put on Russia regarding arms exports to Iran.[70] (Cordesman 1999a: 67–73 and Chubin 1997a: 231, 240)

Inaccessability to Western hardware and supplier unreliability aside, the Islamic Republic's post-war rearmament program faced other major difficulties as well. For one thing, Iran's reliance on Asian, Russian, and Eastern European weaponry created notable problems in the sphere of equipment conversion and standardization. For another, the issue of incompatibility of the weaponry in Iran's inventory caused serious troubles for the Iranians. The incompatibility problem had two dimensions. On the one hand, Iran's Western-supplied weapons systems were not interoperable with the armaments originating from Asia, Russia, and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, there

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[70] In June 1995, Russia had promised the United States to stop selling armaments to Iran and to complete the delivery of all weapons previously sold to the Islamic Republic by the end of 1999. While it never actually fully stood by its promise, Russia officially withdrew from the 1995 agreement in November 2000. (*Arms Control Today*, December 2000)

were serious incompatibility problems between the Asian, Russian, and Eastern European armaments themselves. Although much of the Iranian equipment imported from Asian countries – first and foremost from China and North Korea – was based on older Russian designs, there were differences between those weapons systems and the newer Russian and Eastern European designs that the Iranians had procured. Differences in parts, maintenance procedures, and training, among others, exacerbated Iranian armed forces' problems not only in the sphere of interoperability but also in the areas of sustainability, training, and tactical operations. (Cordesman 1999a: 66–67 and Chubin 1997a: 240)

All in all, the Iranians were faced with the fact that the military hardware they had imported since the end of the Iran-Iraq war was clearly inferior to Western-made armaments both in terms of technological sophistication and military effectiveness. Moreover, due to economic constraints, the Islamic Republic had not been able to purchase the full variety of weaponry offered by non-Western manufacturers. Accordingly, significant gaps remained in the Iranian arms inventory. For example, Iran's ground forces continued to suffer from the lack of items such as infantry fighting vehicles, modern communications, command, control and intelligence systems, night vision equipment, and advanced ammunitions. The absence of adequate air defences as well as the Iranian air force's problems with avionics and radar and missile systems were other examples of the Islamic Republic's hardware shortages. (Eisenstadt 1996: 44–47; Chubin 1994: 40–42 and Chubin 1997a: 240)

To some extent, however, the declining volume of Iran's post-war conventional arms imports reflected the changes in the Islamic Republic's security environment. Above all, the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 and its disastrous implications for Iraq – Iran's most immediate external security problem – gave the Islamic Republic some leeway as far as the rearmament imperative was concerned. In regional comparison, the level of Iran's arms acquisitions since the end of the Iran-Iraq war remained below that of its southern Gulf Arab neighbours. To give one example, Saudi Arabia's new arms purchases between 1991–1998 totalled some $38.1 billion, compared with the Islamic Republic's acquisitions of some $6.2 billion. The arms deals signed by Kuwait during the same period were worth about $7.6 billion, and even the arms imports of the United Arab Emirates, totalling some $12.4 billion between 1991–1998, clearly exceeded the value of Iran's purchases. (Cordesman 2000a: 21)

The Islamic Republic's post-Iran-Iraq war arms imports were inferior to those of its southern Gulf neighbours in qualitative terms, too. Unlike Iran, the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council had an easy access to Western manufacturers' state-of-the-art conventional armaments whose military effectiveness had become highly evident in the course of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict. The overwhelming military power of the American-led coalition in the brief forty-three-day war against Iraq in early 1991 had demonstrated the Iranians that they would hardly be able to reduce the technological lead of the states that were in possession of advanced conventional weaponry in the near future. Given the technological supremacy of the developed world, embodied in the military might of the United States, the Islamic Republic's leadership may have concluded that instead of trying to keep up with the so-called revolution in military affairs, Iran should focus on building up its WMD capabilities. In fact, many other Middle Eastern states may have drawn the same conclusion, for no other regional state except Israel could have realistically hoped to acquire, develop, and integrate RMA into its military structure in the foreseeable future. (Chubin 1994: 20 and Anthony and Jones 1998: 5, 21–22)

The unlikelihood that the debilitated Iraq[71] would have threatened Iran's national security any time soon and the high probability that Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries would have been closely assisted by the United States in the event of a military confrontation between them and Iran may have further precipitated Iranian leaders to shift emphasis from conventional weapons to WMD. Moreover, although the Islamic Republic's post-war rearmament program had faced numerous difficulties, Iran's armed forces had recovered from the Iran-Iraq war to the extent that even with its existing conventional capabilities, the Islamic Republic would have been able to meet its basic defensive requirements. For example, as far as the military balance between the Islamic Republic and Iraq, Iran's most immediate military concern, was concerned, it was believed, at the end of the 1990s, that the balance had gradually started to shift in the favour of Iran. (Rathmell 1999: 42–44, 46)

The scope and the problems of Iran's post-war rearmament program suggested that, for the foreseeable future, the Islamic Republic's abilities to use conventional force for offensive military purposes would remain weak. Nevertheless, there were elements in the Iranian program that worried especially Iran's Gulf Arab neighbours. Such worries

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[71] For a discussion of the consequences of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict to Iraq, see Yetiv (1999: 149–150).

centered, above all, around the steps taken by the Islamic Republic to develop an effective naval force. Iran's acquisitions – among others – of three Kilo-class submarines from Russia, Houdong-class missile boats as well as anti-ship and coastal missiles from China, together with the Islamic Republic's busy naval exercise schedule and its deployment of anti-ship missiles in the strategically located Abu Musa and Tunb islands in the Gulf, caused serious concern about Iran's naval intentions among the regional states (Oren 2000: 93).

However, while Iran's activities in the naval field were driven by the Islamic Republic's desire to be able to project power in the Gulf and to deny the control of the waterway to an interventionary force, Iran's naval undertakings were targeted at extra-regional states – above all the United States – rather than the Gulf Arab states. Moreover, Iran's critical economic dependence on the Persian Gulf as a transit route meant that the Islamic Republic had every incentive to refrain from actions that could have put the stability of the Gulf in jeopardy. Iran's propensity for cautious behaviour was further increased by the awareness that military adventurism in the region might bring the country's naval forces into direct confrontation with U.S. naval units patrolling the Gulf as well as by the fact that the naval forces of the Islamic Republic themselves were suffering from a host of internal weaknesses. They included equipment deficiencies as well as problems related to effective employment of Iran's submarine capability. (Chubin 1994: 45; Eisenstadt 1996: 49, 52–54 and Cordesman 1999a: 71)

3.4.3 Domestic arms production

As noted earlier, the leadership of the Islamic Republic viewed the strengthening of Iran's domestic weapons production capacity as an essential component of the country's post-war rearmament drive. The objective of establishing a strong Iranian military-industrial base stemmed from two principal considerations: Iran's desire to reduce its vulnerability to what it considered the political whims of international arms suppliers and its belief that domestic production reduced overall weapons procurement costs. During the first years after the revolution, Iranian authorities had not given serious attention to the issue of indigenous arms production. The situation changed in 1983 when the Islamic Republic started to respond to its war-time combat needs and to its international isolation by reviving the military-industrial sector inherited from the Shah. As a result, Iranian ordnance factories ultimately managed to supply a considerable part

of the country's need for combat consumables – ammunitions as well as various kinds of small arms and spare parts – in the course of the war. Simultaneously, however, Iran was not able to domestically fill the major gaps in sophisticated weaponry in its arsenal. It was this shortcoming the authorities of the Islamic Republic began to address after the end of the Iran-Iraq war. (Chubin 1994: 33 and Sayigh 1997: 179–180, 182)

Iran's post-war arms production efforts were successful in many respects. For example, the Iranians were capable of significantly building up the country's reserves of basic weaponry and ammunitions. Most of the small arms needed by Iran's armed forces were now domestically manufactured, in addition to which Iranian ordnance plants managed to rebuild armor and engines for the country's armored weapons and a host of weapons systems imported from Western, Asian, and former Soviet bloc sources. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic's arms industry reached the capacity to make spare parts for Iran's Western-supplied tanks and other armored vehicles, as well as to produce a limited number of light-wheeled armored personnel carriers. Also, the Iranians succeeded, among others, in upgrading some of the military aircraft supplied by the Americans during the Shah's rule, in producing long-range rockets, and in adapting Chinese anti-ship missile systems for use on patrol craft and Western-made ships.[72] (Cordesman 1999a: 74–75)

Yet in spite of the increased allocation of resources to indigenous arms production and the indisputable strides made by the Islamic Republic in this area particularly at the end of the 1990s, Iran's arms industry was not able to diminish the Islamic Republic's dependence on foreign sophisticated conventional weaponry. The problems blocking Iranian breakthroughs in the development of technologically advanced armaments continued to be numerous. Some of them were related to the overall management of the country's arms industry. Even though the management structures had been somewhat rationalized since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran's arms industry still suffered from duplication of efforts, waste, and corruption – a good example of Iranian inefficiencies was the fact that the country's regular armed forces and the IRGC continued to have separate weapons production programs. Added to these, there were more fundamental problems that stemmed from the weaknesses of Iran's scientific, industrial, and educational infrastructure. (Eisenstadt 1998: 74–75; Hashim 1995: 57 and Cordesman 1999a: 73–74)

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[72] For a detailed description of the military items produced by the Islamic Republic's ordnance factories, see Sayigh (1997: 184–191) and Cordesman (1999a: 76–78).

Because of its poor international reputation, the Islamic Republic had formidable difficulties in obtaining materials, components, and assistance from abroad for its arms manufacture efforts. These troubles not only delayed Iran's weapons production programs but also limited the sophistication of Iranian-made hardware. Obviously, the Islamic Republic would not have tried to obtain foreign items and expertise had its own industrial base been broad and advanced enough to support activities in the sphere of military manufacturing. That this was not the case was illustrated, among others, by Iranian civilian industries' inability to provide local ordnance factories with many of the support equipment and spare parts needed in weapons production. (Sayigh 1997: 192–193)

The problems in the Islamic Republic's research and development sector – such as inadequate funding and training, weak research infrastructure, and insufficient contacts between researchers and production units – further undermined Iranian efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of conventional weaponry. The state of Iran's national research and development sector was expected to remain poor, for Iran's educational system itself was plagued with major difficulties. In addition to the fact that a large section of qualified Iranian academics had left the country after the revolution, the educational institutions of the Islamic Republic suffered, among others, from the lack of funding, from ideological favouritism at the expense of expertise, and from excessive bureaucracy. (Hashim 1997: 220–221 and Hashim 1995: 57–58)

Ultimately, Iran's efforts in the sphere of domestic arms production were hampered by the Islamic Republic's difficult economic situation. But even if the leadership of the Islamic Republic was not able to channel as much financial resources to the domestic arms industry as it would have liked to, the Islamic Republic was still spending several hundred million dollars annually on the domestic production of conventional armaments (Cordesman 1999a: 73). This sum and Iran's plans to expand the country's arms production capacity indicated that the leadership of the Islamic Republic was committed to the goal of self-sufficiency in arms production.

3.5 Post-War Arms Control Operations: From the Cease-fire to the Gulf Conflict

3.5.1 The regional arena

Iran's post-war conventional arms control policy can be divided into four discernible phases. The first phase covered the period between July 1988 and August 1990, in other words, the time between Iran's acceptance of the UN Security Council Resolution 598 and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. During these months, Iran's foreign policy-makers were primarily occupied with two issues, both of which concerned Iran's relations with its Arab neighbours: the UN-sponsored peace talks between the Islamic Republic and Iraq and the formulation of a pragmatic policy in the Gulf benefiting Iran's reconstruction imperative.

As far as the peace negotiations between Iran and Iraq were concerned, the parties were not able to achieve a breakthrough in their discussions.[73] Differing views of the issues that had to be solved before a final peace settlement led to a deadlock which did not open until Iraq had become entangled in its military operation in Kuwait. From the arms control point of view, the Security Council Resolution 598, which had established the framework for Iranian-Iraqi peace talks, steered the negotiations only in broad terms. Paragraph one of the resolution demanded both parties to discontinue all military actions and to withdraw their forces to internationally recognized boundaries, whereas paragraph eight requested the UN secretary-general to examine – in consultation with Iran, Iraq, and other Gulf states – measures that would enhance security and stability in the region. The fact that paragraph one was not observed by the negotiating parties and that paragraph eight did not bring about concrete arms control measures in the Gulf supports, for its part, the observation according to which conflicts that end in stalemate without a victory very rarely generate arrangements related to the control of armaments. Rather, a stalemate outcome fuels arms build-up because former belligerents are not ready to reduce their military capabilities as long as there is no final peace settlement in place and renewed hostilities remain a constant possibility. (*Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council 1987,* 1988: 5–6 and Tanner 1993: 29–33)

The 'no war, no peace' stalemate with Iraq between the two Gulf conflicts posed a dilemma for Iran's leadership. It obstructed not only the implementation of much-

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[73] For a detailed discussion of the peace talks between Iran and Iraq during the period under consideration, see Parasiliti (1993: 225–232).

needed reconstruction measures at home but also major openings in the area of foreign policy. Above all, it bred tension that could have escalated to recommencement of armed hostilities. This was repeatedly underlined by Iranian officials who regarded Iraq's refusal to withdraw its troops from Iranian soil even after the cease-fire had come into effect as the most serious obstacle to a peace settlement between the two countries. In the Iranian view, Iraq's refusal to withdraw its military forces from Iranian territory indicated that the Iraqi leadership had not given up the expansionist objectives that had inspired it to start the Iran-Iraq war in the first place. (CD/PV.514, 1989: 4; CD/PV.543, 1990: 12 and A/44/PV.13, 1989: 97)

But the Iraqi leadership's own ambitions were not viewed as the only reason for Iraq's behaviour and for the 'no war, no peace' deadlock. As Hashimi Rafsanjani, the president of the Islamic Republic, pointed out in November 1989, Iranian authorities believed that Western powers – and the United States, in particular – fuelled discord and tension in the Gulf in order to legitimize their continued military presence in the region. These same forces were said to be responsible for the Security Council's reluctance to guarantee Iraq's compliance with resolution 598. (Rafsanjani 1989: 462 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 3)

As the peace talks between Iran and Iraq remained stalled, the Islamic Republic, ready to pursue a more open and pragmatic foreign policy, tried to make advances in its relations with other Gulf Arab governments. In fact, the overtures made by Iran to promote cooperation and confidence between the Islamic Republic and GCC countries had started soon after the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war had taken effect. One crucial element in Iran's diplomatic argumentation on cooperation in the Gulf was the idea of a regional security system. In October 1988, at the UN, Iran's foreign minister Vilayati declared the Islamic Republic's willingness to establish firm and friendly relations with its littoral Gulf Arab neighbours in order to provide long-term security for the region. By referring to Iran's 1986 proposal for a regional security arrangement, Vilayati pointed out that Iran had declared its readiness for regional cooperation already during the Iran-Iraq war, and thus, had pursued a constructive policy in the Gulf for years.[74] (A/43/PV.14, 1988: 73)

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[74] For another Iranian statement pointing to the consistency of the Islamic Republic's Gulf policy, see Rafsanjani (1989: 460). As a gesture of goodwill towards GCC states, in early 1989 Iran offered to help clear mines off their coasts (Marschall 2003: 101).

In the Iranian view, common religious, cultural, and economic ties between the Persian Gulf countries provided the essential basis for greater solidarity and cooperation among them. These ties, Iranian officials argued, had to be utilized for the creation of an indigeneous regional security system free from extra-regional involvement.[75] As a first step towards security cooperation in the Gulf, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, Gulf countries should engage in a constructive dialogue and thereby lay the foundation for more ambitious cooperation measures. According to the Iranians, such a dialogue could include informal diplomatic discussions about the threat perceptions of individual Gulf countries, for example, along the lines set by the countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in their talks on confidence- and security-building measures in Vienna in 1989.[76] Subsequently, the Gulf states could establish "formal collective security arrangements" that would also include far-reaching arms control measures.[77] (Ibid.; A/44/PV.13, 1989: 101 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

Simultaneously, however, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic warned that the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf constituted a serious threat to regional efforts to establish an indigeneous security system. In the Iranian analysis, the reason for the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf was clear and logical: to dominate an oil-rich and strategically important region of the world by intimidating the Gulf countries so that they would not challenge the interests of Western powers, and particularly those of the United States, in the area.[78] To counter the foreign naval presence in the Gulf, the Islamic Republic made repeated calls for effective naval arms control measures in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The implementation of the long-lived Indian Ocean peace zone initiative by the member states of the UN was regarded

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[75] Iranian officials stressed the point that the security of the Persian Gulf region should rest in the hands of the regional states only both in its statements on multilateral arms control fora as well as in bilateral talks with GCC countries (Marschall 2003: 24, 104).

[76] According to Iranian officials, the Islamic Republic was "deeply convinced that immediate confidence-building measures must be adopted" in the Gulf (A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 58). The CSCE countries' diplomatic talks in Vienna, to which the Iranians alluded to, produced a final document that was adopted in November 1990. The 1990 Vienna document dealt with exchange of military information, reduction of risks, military contacts, observation of military activities, constraints on military activities, verification, communications, as well as implementation assessment. For the details of the CSCE document, see Goldblat (1994: 162–164).

[77] It should be noted that, at this stage, Iran's deliberations on Gulf security left the door open for Iraq's participation in the regional security cooperation. However, as the relations between the Islamic Republic and Iraq remained tense and no peace agreement was in sight, the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms were the real target of Iran's diplomatic initiatives. (CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

[78] See A/43/PV.14 (1988: 73–75) and A/C.1/43/PV.15 (1988: 58). According to the Iranians, the policies of the major powers in the Gulf testified to a general great power behavioral pattern. As put by one Iranian diplomat, "big powers' naval armaments – particularly those of the United States – have always

by the Iranians as an appropriate diplomatic mechanism for the purpose (A/C.1/43/PV.33, 1988: 41 and CD/PV.514, 1989: 6).[79]

The authorities of the Islamic Republic stated that the threat of foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf – defined by them as a danger to the sovereignty and security of the Gulf states, as an economic burden to GCC states, and as a manifestation of global naval arms racing – necessitated a new approach to Gulf security. The approach put forth by the Iranians based on the fundamental premise, a traditional Iranian view, that the security of the Persian Gulf was the exclusive responsibility of the littoral states. In the view of the Islamic Republic's president, cooperation and coordination between Iran and GCC countries should rest on respect for the standards and principles recognized by the international community and the Islamic world. Accordingly, president Rafsanjani continued, Iran harboured no power political ambitions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf and strongly condemned the idea of a regional guardian or policeman acting independently or on behalf of foreign powers – the role Iran's ousted Shah and Saddam Hussein were claimed by the Iranians to have been saddled with. Furthermore, Rafsanjani assured Iran's Gulf neighbours that there could be a constructive relationship between the Islamic Republic and GCC countries, even if Iran was the largest country in the region, had the longest coastline, and was one of the oldest nations in the Persian Gulf. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 58; Rafsanjani 1989: 462–465 and CD/PV.514, 1989: 6)

In spite of the Islamic Republic's conciliatory overtures towards the Gulf Arab countries, however, Iranian officials did not remain silent about security issues they considered to be straining Iran–GCC relations. First and foremost, the Iranian government was critical of the fact that the GCC governments' security policies relied on extra-regional and especially U.S. military support. In the words of president Rafsanjani, "to seek protection from others out of fear of one's own neighbours or brothers or coreligionists is not in accordance with the spirit of Islam and freedom-loving people." He reminded Iran's Gulf Arab neighbours that reliance on foreign actors, who were uninterested in the regional states' well-being, should be abandoned,

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played an undeniable role in facilitating military action by those powers against developing countries" (A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 59).

[79] Iran's representatives argued that in the face of the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in early 1989, there were no pretexts left for Western powers to justify their military presence in the Gulf and for their refusal to implement the Indian Ocean initiative (A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 12).

and attempts by foreign powers to create discord and division between Iran and GCC countries categorically rejected. (Rafsanjani 1989: 463–464)

Moreover, Iran expressed its concern about GCC countries' recent arms purchases. By referring in particular to Saudi Arabia's massive arms acquisitions, the officials of the Islamic Republic disapprovingly noted that some Gulf countries were continuously arming themselves with sophisticated conventional weaponry.[80] As a result, Iran's arms control officials declared that major arms-producing countries should significantly constrain their arms transfers to the Persian Gulf region and to the whole of the Middle East. In addition, they insisted that the major arms-manufacturers and all other extra-regional states should support and respect any regional arms control arrangement agreed on in the Persian Gulf. (CD/PV.543, 1990: 11; A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 59 and A/C.1/44/PV.35, 1989: 7)

3.5.2 The global facet of the Iranian argumentation

While regional matters were on the top of Iran's foreign policy agenda during the July 1988–August 1990 period, the officials of the Islamic Republic took a stand on the state of arms control on the global scene as well.[81] First of all, the Iranians shared the optimism generated by the profound changes in the Cold War international system. The relaxation of the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States, the re-formation of Europe's political map, and the progress made in ending long-lived regional conflicts in Africa and Asia impressed foreign minister Vilayati to declare, in October 1988, that "the era of dominance by superpowers over the destinies of the Third World and the oppressed nations is very much a closed chapter." In Iran's view, the positive developments in world politics made the prospects for the halting of the global arms race exceptionally promising. Therefore, the officials of the Islamic Republic underscored, it was of utmost importance that the new international atmosphere would be translated into global and regional arms control arrangements. (A/43/PV.14, 1988: 62; A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 51 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 2)

The optimistic tones in Iran's diplomatic language notwithstanding, Iranian officials mostly concentrated on the international security issues they found troublesome and

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[80] For GCC countries' arms purchases between 1987–1990, see Cordesman (2000a: 19, 21).

[81] Iran's officials argued that success in regional arms control depended on positive developments and achievements at the international level (A/C.1/44/PV.35, 1989: 7).

disturbing. Increased sophistication of conventional weapons and the growth of national conventional arms arsenals in various parts of the world were among such issues (A/C.1/43/PV.53, 1988: 27–28 and CD/PV.514, 1989: 5). According to Iranian officials, the qualitative and quantitative build-up of conventional weapons strengthened the spiral of arms racing and forced individual states to seek security through arms acquisitions. The search for armaments and the sense of false security that weapons created, the Iranians added, led to increased inter-state tensions and put a heavy burden on national economies especially in the developing world. (CD/PV.479, 1988: 2–3 and A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 51)

As expected, Iranian authorities blamed the major powers and their "domineering policies" for the global conventional arms race. In the Iranian analysis, arms transfers by the major powers to the Third World stemmed not only from commercial calculations but also from the major powers' desire to gain more influence in recipient countries' political and cultural lives. Major power disregard – even in the middle of the groundbreaking changes that were occurring in the international system – for developing countries' threat perceptions and arms control proposals were mentioned by the Iranians as yet another example of the continuous disparagement Third World states were subjected to.[82] It seemed, the Iranians claimed, that the only way for developing countries to be taken seriously was to strengthen their national military arsenals. (A/C.1/43/PV.53, 1988: 31 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 10)

In the end, however, the representatives of the Islamic Republic emphasized that the control of conventional armaments, and not the build-up of military capabilities, was the right choice on the path towards increased international and regional security. But the success of arms control diplomacy itself, the Iranians stressed, was dependent on states' respect for two key factors that should guide international relations: the principle of justice and international law. Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic assured, followed the principle of justice and international law and also had a special commitment to arms control. This commitment was told by the Iranians to stem, first, from the Islamic Republic's ideological premises and, secondly, from its desire to avoid

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[82] In this connection, Iranian authorities expressed their opposition to the thesis according to which the United States had won the Cold War. In Iran's analysis, the dissolution of the Cold War international system had resulted from the downfall of the superpower ideologies of socialism and capitalism, which, Iranian officials pointed out, had failed because they were "materialistic and alien to human nature." Still, at the same time, the Islamic Republic's fears of an international order dominated by the United States were evident in many Iranian pronouncements. The Iranians argued, among others, that no one state

another war experience. (CD/PV.514, 1989: 4; A/44/PV.13, 1989: 91 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 10)

3.6 Iran and the Gulf Conflict of 1990–1991

The Islamic Republic's efforts between July 1988 and August 1990 to reach its main foreign policy objectives in the Gulf did not turn out to be successful. First, the peace talks between Iran and Iraq, though showing some progress in the spring and summer of 1990, had not produced a final settlement.[83] Secondly, the Iranian-desired rapprochement with GCC countries had failed, largely because of the strained relations between Saudi Arabia, the key GCC player, and the Islamic Republic.[84] However, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the Islamic Republic's neutrality in the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict that followed significantly advanced Iranian objectives in the region. Saddam Hussein's decision, conveyed to president Rafsanjani in a letter dated 14 August 1990, to give in to Iran's demands in the peace talks – most notably, his readiness to share the sovereignty of Shatt al-Arab and to pull back Iraqi troops from Iranian territory – in order to focus Iraq's energies on the military operation in Kuwait constituted a clear diplomatic victory for the Iranians. Moreover, the Islamic Republic's unequivocal condemnation of the Iraqi invasion and its policy of neutrality during the Gulf conflict altered GCC states' perceptions of Iran's foreign policy intentions and, accordingly, positively affected the problematic relations between the Islamic Republic and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms.[85]

Iran's neutral diplomatic position on the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 – which marked the second phase of the Islamic Republic's post-Iran–Iraq war argumentation on conventional arms control – rested on three major objectives. By adopting an even-handed policy with respect to the Gulf conflict, the Islamic Republic wanted to safeguard Gulf security, reduce tensions between Iran and the Arab world, and improve its reputation in the West (Amirahmadi 1993: 95). As far as the security situation in the

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should be allowed to make unilateral decisions on global security, including arms control. (CD/PV.543, 1990: 10)

[83] For the Iran-Iraq peace talks in the course of spring and summer of 1990, see Parasiliti (1993: 229–232).

[84] For the state of Iran-GCC relations between July 1988 and August 1990, see Chubin (1992: 62–65, 70).

[85] For statements in which the representatives of the Islamic Republic condemned the Iraqi aggression, demanded Iraq's immediate withdrawal from Kuwait, and simultaneously expressed Iran's disapproval of the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf, see A/45/PV.5 (1990: 43–47) and A/45/PV.61 (1990: 38).

region was concerned, the Gulf conflict proved to be a mixed blessing for the Iranians. On the positive side, the crushing military defeat suffered by Iraq against the U.S.-led coalition forces in the 43-day war between 17 January and 27 February 1991 undoubtedly benefited the Iranians who had been highly worried about Iraq's military build-up and intentions since the end of the Iran-Iraq war. On the negative side, Iraq's military adventurism led to a massive influx of foreign military forces to the Gulf region, a development the Iranians would have strongly liked not to take place.

From the Iranian point of view, then, the ideal result of the Gulf conflict would have been the military defeat of Iraq, coupled with the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the Gulf and the establishment of a new Gulf security system formed exclusively by the regional states themselves. In the course of the Gulf conflict, thus, Iran's representatives actively promoted their views on Gulf security and explicated the fundamental components of a regional security system as defined by the Islamic Republic. Reminding their Arab neighbours that the Gulf conflict had increased the need for an indigenous security arrangement in the region, Iranian authorities argued that such an arrangement should be free from all forms of foreign involvement, for only the regional states – tied by religious, cultural, and economic bonds – could guarantee the long-term stability and interests of the region. The representatives of the Islamic Republic also pointed out that a Gulf security arrangement should include all the regional states because any exclusion would inevitably breed tension and instability in the future.[86] (A/C.1/45/PV.46, 1990: 46; Amirahmadi 1993: 94 and CD/PV.582, 1991: 3)

According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, the UN Security Council Resolution 598 provided the necessary institutional framework for the proposed regional security arrangement. By referring to that resolution's paragraph eight, they maintained that the regional states should hold their security discussions in cooperation with the UN secretary-general. In return, the Iranians added, the world organization should support the deliberations between the Gulf countries and to ensure that the eventual regional arrangement would be compatible with the principles and objectives of the UN. (CD/PV.582, 1991: 3)

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[86] In addition to using multilateral arms control fora to express its demand that foreign military forces should withdraw from the Persian Gulf and that the security of the region should be jointly safeguarded by the Gulf states themselves, the Islamic Republic presented its views on Gulf security during the Gulf conflict also in bilateral talks with individual Gulf Arab governments both in GCC capitals and in Tehran (Marschall 2003: 107, 109).

In Iran's view, a collective security arrangement in the Gulf would pave the way not only for joint action against external security problems, but for arms control as well. Iranian representatives pointed out that a regional security system would reverse the trend of regional arms racing and enable the regional states to allocate a large part of the resources reserved for military purposes to the economic, scientific, and technological development of the region (A/C.1/45/PV.46, 1990: 29–30). Accordingly, the Iranians were of the opinion that the formation of a security arrangement in the Gulf should be accompanied with explicit and concrete measures in the field arms control. Such measures, the Iranians said, could include steps that would aim to tackle the build-up of state-of-the-art conventional weaponry in the region expedited by the Gulf conflict and to exclude the presence of foreign military forces in the region – two objectives the Iranians found outstandingly important.[87]

With regard to the first issue, Iran's arms control officials underscored the need for regional CBM,[88] whereas their calls for naval arms control both at the international and the regional level – including the implementation of the Indian Ocean zone of peace initiative – were meant to deal with the issue of foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf. Ultimately, the representatives of the Islamic Republic linked their views on the limitation of conventional armaments to the control of WMD by stating that measures such as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East would strengthen the Iranian-proposed collective security system among the Gulf states. (A/C.1/45/PV.46, 1990: 27, 29–30 and A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 41–42)

On the whole, Iran's pronouncements on Gulf security and regional arms control in this period reflected the Islamic Republic's desire not to be excluded from the post-Gulf conflict political and security order in the region. For this reason, Iranian authorities were highly critical of those Gulf-related security cooperation plans – presented at the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent war between Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition forces – which did not consider Iran's participation necessary.[89] One of such plans was the inter-Arab initiative built around the so-called Damascus Declaration of

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[87] For Iranian statements underlining the dangers pertaining to the build-up of advanced conventional weaponry in the Gulf, see A/45/PV.5 (1990: 48) and CD/PV.582 (1991: 2–3). For statements in which the Islamic Republic condemned foreign military presence in the Gulf and portrayed it as a threat to the security and interests of the regional states, see A/45/PV.5 (1990: 46–47) and A/45/PV.61 (1990: 38).

[88] In this connection, the Iranians emphasized that ever since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Islamic Republic had been ready to promote the implementation of CBM in the Persian Gulf. Iran's 1986 proposal for a regional security arrangement was mentioned as the most potent proof of this. (A/C.1/45/PV.35, 1990: 21 and A/C.1/45/PV.46, 1990: 27)

March 1991 in which Egyptian and Syrian troops were planned to be stationed in GCC countries in order to strengthen and support local military forces against external threats. The fact that the Islamic Republic was closed out of this plan angered Iran's leaders who saw the Damascus Declaration as a deliberate attempt to isolate the Islamic Republic and to increase Arab influence in the Gulf region. In the Iranian view, no security arrangement in the area would succeed without Iranian participation because, in the final analysis, the Islamic Republic was the "pillar of regional stability and security" (A/45/PV.5, 1990: 46).

3.7 Iran's Arms Control Operations in the Post-Gulf Conflict Period[90]

3.7.1 The regional arena

Despite active diplomatic efforts during the Gulf conflict, the Islamic Republic was not able to convince its Gulf Arab neighbours of the need to create an indigenous security arrangement in the region. Even though some Gulf sheikhdoms – Kuwait, Qatar, and especially Oman – adopted a receptive attitude towards Iran's diplomatic initiatives (Ehteshami 1995: 152),[91] in the end, GCC states chose to organize their post-Gulf conflict security through bilateral defense agreements with Western powers and especially with the United States.[92] As a result of these security agreements, signed between 1991–1994, GCC countries became destinations for large-scale transfers of sophisticated conventional weaponry from the West and thereby maintained their status as one of the world's largest market for conventional armaments. This development starkly contrasted with the international debate in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict on the urgency to limit arms transfers to the Middle East. It also diminished prospects for arms control in the Gulf. With the exception of the arms control measures directed at the

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[89] For the various plans presented in the course of the Gulf conflict on how to organize Gulf security in the conflict's aftermath, see Amirahmadi (1993: 113).

[90] The term 'post-Gulf conflict period' – the third distinctive phase of Iran's conventional arms control policy following the end of the Iran-Iraq war – is used here to refer to the time period between the end of the Gulf conflict on 27 February 1991 and the election of Muhammad Khatami as the president of the Islamic Republic on 23 May 1997.

[91] For example, at the GCC summit of December 1990, Iran's participation in a Gulf security arrangement had been one of the topics of the conference (Marschall 2003: 110).

[92] For the bilateral security agreements between the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms and Western governments – which included provisions, among others, on joint military exercises, on the Western powers' access to GCC states' ports and facilities, as well as on the prepositioning of Western military equipment in the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms – see Cordesman (2000b: 77–78, 89–91, 101, 107–108, 116–117, 123–124).

defeated Iraq, embodied in the UN Security Council Resolution 687 that dealt with the control of Iraq's conventional arms and its WMD arsenal, the post-Gulf conflict period did not generate far-reaching arms control measures in the Persian Gulf.

Expectedly, the Iranian leadership was highly critical of GCC governments' security cooperation with Western powers.[93] Such collaboration was viewed by the Iranians as a conscious effort to anchor the West's military and political power in the region and to ostracize the Islamic Republic from regional politics. In the same vein, Iranian authorities were highly skeptical of the Western Middle East- and Gulf-related arms control proposals that were made in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict.[94]

The U.S. initiative of June 1991 carrying the name of president George H. W. Bush, in particular, captured the Islamic Republic's diplomatic attention. In Iran's assessment, the Bush initiative – which called on the world's major arms suppliers to avoid destabilizing arms transfers to the Middle East and to strengthen their national export control mechanisms – was intended to bolster the major powers' hegemonic intentions in the Middle East and to weaken the military capabilities of those regional states that opposed such aspirations.[95] Moreover, the Iranians believed that Western governments would in any case give a preferential treatment to their Gulf allies in any potential arms control arrangement exclusively agreed on by the major arms exporters.[96] (Ali 1996: 48). Finally, the fact that the Bush administration acted against its own arms control initiative by announcing massive arms sales to some Middle Eastern governments in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict contributed to Iran's suspicions of the motives of the U.S. initiative.[97]

The Islamic Republic's critical approach to arms control proposals that conflicted with Iran's attempts to keep the initiative in Middle East- and particularly Gulf-related

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[93] After Kuwait had signed a ten-year bilateral agreement with the United States in September 1991, for example, the Islamic Republic criticized the agreement as being "bound to encourage more military intervention from the U.S. in the region" and laying "the foundations of insecurity and instability." Also note the following remark made by president Rafsanjani in February 1993: "We are opposed to these [security] pacts and believe that any military presence of the Westerners in the region is a factor disturbing peace and stability." (Marschall 2003: 164 and Gargash 1996: 145)

[94] For a discussion of the various arms control proposals made after the end of the Gulf conflict, see Steinberg (1993: 183–184).

[95] Due to reasons that become evident in the context of Islamic Iran's WMD-related arms control operations, neither did Iran's leaders warm to the other key elements of the June 1991 Bush initiative. These included the proposal for a freeze on the acquisition, production, and testing of SSM in the Middle East as well as the call for a verifiable ban on the production and acquisition in the Middle East of enriched uranium and separated plutonium (ibid.: 183).

[96] In this connection, the representatives of the Islamic Republic further noted that if the Arab countries of the Middle East continued to receive sophisticated conventional weaponry from the West, the non-Arab countries of the region – meaning Iran – should be entitled to acquire them as well (Ali 1996: 48).

arms control matters in local hands was also evident with regard to the multilateral arms control talks that were held within the Arms Control and Regional Security working group of the Middle East peace negotiations.[98] Iran's critical attitude towards those talks emanated from the Islamic Republic's general opposition to the peace process that had been launched in the fall 1991 Madrid peace conference between Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab governments. In reality, Iranian officials claimed, the peace talks were a process of "force, intimidation, suppression, submission and surrender – a conspiracy against Islam and Palestine" (Zarif 1995: 120 and A/48/PV.14, 1993: 21). This Iranian stance illustrated that even if the Islamic Republic had been invited to join the ACRS talks, it would have been both ideologically and politically very difficult for the Iranians to take part in them. However, the officials of the Islamic Republic understood that by remaining outside the ACRS mechanism, Iran's chances to achieve its arms control objectives in the Middle East and the Gulf diminished. The fact that all GCC states took part in the ACRS talks only added to Iran's sense of diplomatic isolation.

As a result of the post-Gulf conflict security arrangements between GCC states and Western governments and the ACRS process, Iran's decision-makers were forced to devise policies that better corresponded with the political and military realities in the Gulf and the wider Middle East. In the Gulf, Iran's revised diplomatic approach consisted of two elements. On the one hand, through diplomatic openings, the Islamic Republic tried to weaken the security ties between GCC states and Western powers, sought to improve the relations with its Gulf Arab neighbours, and attempted to convince them of the necessity of an alternative, Iranian-driven regional security scheme. On the other hand, as the Iran-GCC relations were making a slow progress for the most part of the post-Gulf conflict period, the Islamic Republic pursued its regional security interests by seeking to take advantage of the Gulf Arab governments' mutual tensions and by cultivating bilateral relations with individual GCC states (Chubin and Tripp 1996: 36).

Iran's conventional arms control operations in the post-Gulf conflict period consisted of already familiar diplomatic stances and of new initiatives. As for the former, the Islamic Republic's proposal for a regional security system free from external influence

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[97] For a discussion of the Bush administration's arms sales to the Middle East, see Steinberg (1993: 184).
[98] Iran, together with Iraq and Libya, were not invited to participate in the ACRS talks which began in early 1992 and broke down in 1995. For a detailed account of the content and the results of the ACRS talks, see Junnola (1998: 47–52).

dominated Iranian officials' diplomatic argumentation. In the Islamic Republic's view, the Gulf conflict had only intensified the need for indigenous security cooperation in the region. Recognizing that cooperation between the Gulf states in non-military fields would help to pave the way for regional collaboration in the security realm, Iranian officials called for the expansion of political, economic, and cultural relations among the regional states. Also, the Iranians pointed out that regional cooperation in the Gulf should be founded on the following principles: sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of international borders, non-resort to force in the settlement of disputes, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs (A/46/PV.5, 1991: 56 and A/47/PV.79, 1992: 76).

While speaking for increased political, economic, and cultural interaction among the Gulf states, however, Iranian authorities were of the opinion that cooperation in the area of security should not depend on developments in other sectors of regional cooperation. Thus, they argued that the time was ripe for the Gulf states to agree on region-wide CBM. It was during the post-Gulf conflict period that the concept of CBM really made its way to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic lexicon. While before and during the Iran-Iraq war the representatives of the Islamic Republic had very rarely referred to CBM,[99] in the 1990s CBM became an established component of Iran's Gulf argumentation. The Iranians saw CBM as an indispensable instrument that would strengthen the Gulf states' mutual ties to a level that would make the establishment of a regional security system and the implementation of comprehensive arms control measures possible.

Throughout the post-Gulf conflict period, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic called for the establishment of a joint forum where the Gulf states could discuss security issues – including mutual threat perceptions and military doctrines – and to agree on CBM that would be "compatible with the requirements of the region."[100] By referring to experiences in other regions, the Iranians argued that the establishment of an institutionalized channel of communication would make it much easier for the Gulf states to promote mutual security cooperation (CD/PV.659, 1993: 8 and A/50/PV.5, 1995: 29). Despite the fact that the GCC governments did not warm to Iran's calls for the creation of a joint discussion forum and the fact that the relations

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[99] For the rare Iranian references to the concept of CBM before the 1990s, see CD/PV.343 (1986: 7–8) and CD/PV.404 (1987: 4–5).

[100] For these Iranian calls, see CD/PV.659 (1993: 9); A/49/PV.73 (1994: 19) and Zarif (1995: 124).

between GCC states and Iran remained modest at best,[101] however, Iranian officials continued to underline the necessity of joint security deliberations. Thus, in February 1996, for example, the Islamic Republic's deputy foreign minister addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, made a proposal for a comprehensive negotiating security conference among the eight littoral states of the Persian Gulf that would take place under the auspices of the UN.[102] According to the Iranian representative, such a conference could cover a broad range of security issues and include diplomatic discussions on the application in the region of different types of CBM, such as the exchange of military information, promotion of contacts between Gulf militaries, as well as advance notification and observation of military activities. In addition, the deputy foreign minister of the Islamic Republic maintained, the regional states could agree on the conclusion of non-aggression pacts among themselves[103] and take action in the field of WMD arms control as well. (Zarif 1996: 452)

Although Iran's arms control officials made repeated calls for the establishment of a forum where Gulf states could air their views on security matters, they did not view the existence of such a forum as an absolute condition for the implementation of regional CBM. While waiting for the creation of a Gulf forum for security debate, thus, Iran made unilateral diplomatic proposals for various kinds of regional CBM. These included calls on the Gulf states to enhance transparency in armaments through regional cooperation in the context of the UN Register of Conventional Arms (CD/PV.683, 1994: 18 and A/50/PV.5, 1995: 29–30), to regularly exchange reports on national military holdings (CD/PV.690, 1994: 13 and Sadeghi-Dolatabadi 1995: 149), to give prior notifications and explanations of national arms acquisitions, as well as to notify each other in advance of troop movements and military manoeuvres involving more than one division (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6 and Mashhadi 1995: 88).

Moreover, the Islamic Republic's offers to conduct bilateral and multilateral military exercises with its Gulf neighbours were essentially CBM proposals intended to foster

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[101] For an Iranian statement referring to the lack of dialogue and confidence between GCC states and Iran, see Sadeghi-Dolatabadi (1995: 143).

[102] It is important to point out here that, in theory, the Islamic Republic's pronouncements on regional security included Iraq in all aspects of multilateral security cooperation in the Gulf. In practice, however, Iran's security initiatives were directed to GCC states, for it was difficult to imagine that either GCC governments or Iran would have been ready to cooperate with Saddam Hussein, the initiator of two wars in the Gulf. Note, for example, the following statement made by Iran's UN ambassador in 1994: "We can start [regional security cooperation] with other countries excluding Iraq, and when Iraq changes, we can decide collectively to admit them" (Kharrazi 1994: 129).

[103] The Islamic Republic had made its first public offer to sign non-aggression pacts with its Gulf Arab neighbors in Qatar in December 1995 (Potter 1997: 239, 246).

security cooperation among the regional states. In 1994, for example, Iran expressed its willingness to hold joint land exercises with GCC militaries.[104] In 1995, Iran supposedly held joint military exercises with the Omani navy, and in June that year, an Omani warship visited an Iranian port, Bushihr, for the first time since the Iranian revolution – an act that corresponded with the Iranian wish for regular and periodic exchange of visits to military bases between the Gulf states. Furthermore, in the spring of 1996, the representatives of Iran's political and military establishment announced the country's readiness to hold joint naval exercises with Kuwait and other GCC states. In May 1996, Qatar declined another Iranian offer for a bilateral defence treaty, but the fact that two Iranian navy ships made the first friendly port visit to Qatar in 17 years in June 1996 demonstrated that Iran's CBM proposals found resonance at least in some GCC governmental circles. (Chubin and Tripp 1996: 23; Potter 1997: 239–240 and Mashhadi 1995: 88)

In the end, the officials of the Islamic Republic regarded regional CBM as a springboard for the establishment of an indigenous security system in the Gulf. On the path towards this goal, the Iranians marketed not only the ideas of the implementation of regional CBM and non-aggression pacts among the Gulf states, but also referred to the concept of non-offensive defence as a mechanism that could be used to strengthen cooperation and security in the Gulf (Zarif 1996: 451). Yet Iran's diplomatic statements did not include any detailed elaborations on what the implementation of a NOD arrangement in the Persian Gulf would entail. Iranian officials merely pointed to the NOD's basic idea that states should organize their national security in ways which do not pose threats to other countries. Having the basic premise of NOD in mind, the officials of the Islamic Republic also introduced a new concept at the CD in September 1994. The notion of a "defensive security scheme" was put forth by Iran as a reference to the Islamic Republic's view that the armaments in the arsenals of the Gulf states – and all other countries, for that matter – ought to serve only defensive purposes: weapons that enhance capacity for "sudden aggressive strikes and extensive military offensives" should be eliminated. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 10)

While Iran's NOD-based arguments were straightforward calls for quantitative and qualitative arms control in the Persian Gulf, in principle, however, Iran viewed far-reaching arms control measures as belonging to the context of the Gulf regional security

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[104] In 1994, Iran also went further by offering to sign a bilateral defence pact with Qatar. Iran's leadership reportedly proposed to put some 30,000 Iranian soldiers at Qatar's disposal. (Chubin and Tripp 1996: 36)

system. In other words, even though Iran seemed to be ready to deviate from a line of thought that divided Gulf security cooperation into distinct stages,[105] fundamentally, they regarded joint defence and comprehensive arms control activities as the climax of regional security cooperation. Thus, Iran's arms control officials argued that the establishment of an indigenous security system in the Gulf would be an act of arms control itself, because it would reverse the trend of arms racing in the Gulf (A/CN.10/PV.157, 1991: 39–40). As for individual arms control proposals related to conventional weapons made by Iran in the post-Gulf conflict period, they included the following suggestions: the reduction of Gulf states' military budgets and arms purchases;[106] the channelling of resources reserved for military purposes to the development of both the Gulf region[107] and the poor countries of the Third World;[108] the conversion of military production facilities to civilian ones;[109] and finally, the elimination of the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf.[110]

Iranian representatives pointed out that the Islamic Republic's arms control proposals were not exhaustive and welcomed "other positive initiatives which may contribute to the collective security of the Persian Gulf" (CD/PV.659, 1993: 9).[111] That Iran was ready to discuss regional arms control issues both multilaterally and bilaterally (A/50/PV.5, 1995: 30) further testified to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic flexibility regarding the forms of Gulf security cooperation. As far as the role of external actors in the Iranian-visioned Gulf security system was concerned, the officials of the Islamic Republic made numerous references to the importance of a UN contribution to the

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[105] Take, for example, the suggestion made by the Iranian deputy foreign minister in Davos in February 1996 – referred to above – that put CBM and more dramatic arms control steps in the same negotiation basket. Deviations of this kind were at least partly explained by Iran's frustration over GCC governments' lukewarm responses to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic overtures. Still, Iranian officials did not seem to have any unrealistic expectations in this regard in the first place. Note, for example, the words of Iran's UN ambassador in 1994: "I think that in the future they [GCC states] will understand that cooperation with Iran would be in their interest. We are showing patience and prudence, because it takes time" (Kharrazi 1994: 128).

[106] See *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 19) and A/50/PV.5 (1995: 29). It should be noted that neither Iran nor its GCC neighbours had submitted military budget information to the UN reporting mechanism that had been created through the UN General Assembly resolution 35/142B of December 1980. For the details of the UN reporting mechanism dealing with military budgets, see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>.

[107] See CD/PV.690 (1994: 13) and Sadeghi-Dolatabadi (1995: 149).

[108] See Mashhadi (1995: 88).

[109] See CD/PV.659 (1993: 9) and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 19).

[110] See A/48/PV.14 (1993: 23) and A/C.1/51/PV.13 (1996: 19). During the post-Gulf conflict period, Iran's arms control officials repeatedly stressed that the major powers were not interested in the "genuine and long-term security" of the Gulf region. According to them, the presence of foreign forces in the region had historically produced only domestic instability within the regional countries and fuelled tensions between them. (A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 41 and Zarif 1995: 124)

[111] Also see *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* (1994: 269).

creation of such a system. In 1991, for example, the Iranians argued that the inclusion of the UN in Gulf security discussions would ensure that no regional state or grouping would be able to impose its views on other Gulf states. Moreover, the diplomatic umbrella of the UN was viewed by the Iranians as highly important because it would function as a much-needed link between the arms control deliberations at the Gulf level and the arms control instruments at the global level. In general, Iran's arms control officials demanded that external powers should respect and support indigenous security cooperation in the Gulf and refrain from sowing discord and tension in the region. This, the Iranians stressed, would contribute to the success of the regional security talks and thereby to the birth of a new security paradigm in the region – one that would not rest on competition, rivalry, and bloc formation. (A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 42–43; A/49/PV.5, 1994: 40 and Zarif 1996: 450)

3.7.2 The global aspects of Iran's arms control operations

3.7.2.1 The Islamic Republic and the new world order

Even if the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations in the post-Gulf conflict period concentrated mainly on the Persian Gulf region, Iran did not remain passive in diplomatic discussions that dealt with global control of conventional weaponry. As one Iranian representative underscored in October 1992, "global and regional approaches to disarmament complete each other and should thus be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security" (A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 57).

International diplomatic deliberations on conventional arms control offered Iranian officials a forum where they were able to present their views not only on individual arms control issues but also on the changes that had taken place in the international system after the end of the Cold War – changes that had given birth to the notion of a "new world order."[112] At first, the Iranians seemed to share the international enthusiasm over the transitions in world politics. In September 1991, for example, foreign minister Vilayati told the UN General Assembly that the international community was facing a "golden opportunity for a new world order." According to Vilayati, the new world order

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[112] For a discussion of the various interpretations of the idea of the new world order presented after the unraveling of the Cold War international system, see Dorraj (1994: 13–40).

had to be founded on the UN Charter and the principles of justice, peace, security, and equality, as well as on mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and for the cultural and moral values of all nations.[113] (A/46/PV.5, 1991: 48)

Iranian officials argued that it was highly important that states would transform the positive international atmosphere into concrete steps in the field of arms control. In their view, both the identification and the amelioration of the security problems of the post-Cold War era were tasks that had to be carried out multilaterally by the international community as a whole (A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 38). Success in the realm of arms control, the Iranians maintained, was dependent particularly on the willingness of the major powers to abandon the mind-set of domination and the use of force as a means to promote national objectives (A/47/PV.5, 1992: 48). As a remedy for international rivalry and hostility – and as a step towards a new, just world order – the representatives of the Islamic Republic referred to Iran's defensive security scheme proposal of September 1994 and argued that conventional and WMD arms control constituted integral parts of that scheme (CD/PV.690, 1994: 10). At the same time, however, Iranian representatives emphasized that without international measures that would focus on the root causes of armed conflicts – especially on the problems of development, poverty, and overpopulation – the global quest for peace and security would be futile (A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 38 and A/51/PV.4, 1996: 29).

By the mid-1990s, Iran's excitement over the prospects of a new world order had markedly waned. Even in the early years of the decade, Iran had pointed to a number of international developments it had considered worrisome. These had included the refugee problems and ethnic tensions plaguing various regions of the world (A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 38), the alleged double standard of the Western world – told by Iranian officials to be evident, for example, in the way in which the West had reacted to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, on the one hand, and the plight of Muslims in warring Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the other –, as well as the fear of a confrontation between the rich North and the poor South (CD/PV.625, 1992: 2–3 and A/47/PV.5, 1992: 57). And by 1996, the Iranians were disappointed and skeptical enough to present a gloomy assessment of the state of world affairs. As formulated by foreign minister Vilayati at the UN General Assembly in September that year: "[...] a complex movement has

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[113] Iranian officials referred to the advances made in the area of arms control in Europe and to the concerted international action against Iraq during the Gulf conflict as signs of the fact that states were at a juncture of new international circumstances and opportunities (A/CN.10/PV.157, 1991: 37 and CD/PV.625, 1992: 2).

emerged towards autocracy or even totalitarianism at the international level, a trend which is founded on hegemony and flouts justice, freedom, participation, the rule of law, tolerance, human rights, pluralism and democracy in a dangerous and unprecedented manner" (A/51/PV.4, 1996: 25).[114]

3.7.2.2 The United Nations Conventional Arms Register

The mix of optimism and pessimism also coloured Iran's post-Gulf conflict diplomatic stances on individual issues that pertained to global control of conventional armaments. Iran's policy with regard to the UN Conventional Arms Register was a case in point. On the one hand, the Islamic Republic was among the clear majority of the UN member states that voted for the General Assembly resolution 46/36L that established the world organization's arms register in December 1991,[115] it highly welcomed the promotion of transparency in armaments underlined in that resolution (A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 15), and referred to the arms register as a mechanism that advances international and regional arms control efforts and as a component of the Iranian-promoted defensive security scheme (CD/PV.690, 1994: 12).

On the other hand, and in the final analysis, however, Iran's general support for the conventional arms register was overshadowed by the critical aspects of the Iranian argumentation. Iran's criticism of the UN register was composed of two dimensions. First and most importantly, the Iranians thought that the register's scope was too narrow. They constantly aired the view that the arms register should be expanded to include corresponding information about states' WMD arsenals. As lamented by one

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[114] Iran's references to the term 'new international totalitarianism' reflected, above all, the Islamic Republic's uneasiness with the United States' leading position in the post-Cold War international system. The term was used, among others, in connection with Iranian criticism of the U.S. economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic (A/51/PV.4, 1996: 26).

[115] The UN Register of Conventional Arms is the only global cooperative regime relating to conventional weapons transfers and holdings. As a transparency measure, it was designed to serve as a global CBM and as a first step towards global restrictions on conventional weapons shipments and arsenals. The countries that participate in the register are asked to annually provide information about their conventional arms imports and exports during the previous calendar year. Information is requested on seven categories of major conventional weapons – that is, battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles or missile systems – and the participants' reports are supposed to be submitted to the UN by the end of May each year. The reports are expected to include data on the number of weapons the participants have imported and exported during the one-year period and both on the sources and the destinations of the arms transfers in question. In addition, states are invited, on a voluntary basis, to provide further qualitative data on their weapons transfers and on their military holdings and arms procurement through national production. For more on the UN Register of Conventional Arms, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1991* (1992: 58–59); Kervers (1998: 1–7) and Chalmers and Greene (1999: 1–9).

arms control official of the Islamic Republic at the CD in August 1993, "weapons of mass destruction, which were agreed to be part of this [register] exercise, are deliberately subdued, despite the fact that transparency for these weapons has definitely more significant effect and impact on our security than that of conventional weapons" (CD/PV.659, 1993: 8).[116]

Besides indicating that Iran's arms control policy prioritized WMD matters over conventional weapons issues, such Iranian statements illustrated that Iran belonged to the minority of states in the register regime that made a linkage between transparency in conventional and non-conventional armaments. The fact that the Islamic Republic, unlike most participants of the arms register and against the generally held diplomatic view, did not see the regime as a seperate issue exclusively pertaining to conventional armaments became evident also from Iran's voting behaviour at the UN. On many occasions, Iranian officials expressed their reservations about the content of UN resolutions that dealt with the arms register or with the topic of transparency in armaments in general, and sometimes, even completely abstained from them.[117] Moreover, Iran often joined hands with some other Third World countries, such as Egypt, to diplomatically press for the inclusion of an eighth category of weapons, WMD stockpiles, to the original register regime. This happened, for example, during the second UN review of the arms register in 1997 (Kervers 1998: 5). Iranian and Egyptian diplomats also shared the argument that low participation in the register regime by Middle Eastern governments was due to their dissatisfaction with the register's lack of a WMD dimension (CD/PV.659, 1993: 8).[118]

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[116] The standard Iranian diplomatic formulation went as follows: "The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms could serve as a real confidence-building measure only if it was expanded to include data and information on all types of conventional weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects. This was the basic thrust of the General Assembly resolution 46/36L of December 1991." This wording can be found in connection with every Iranian arms register report prepared for the UN in the post-Gulf conflict period (see <http//:www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>). For other Iranian pronouncements that call for the inclusion of a WMD category in the arms register, see (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6 and A/C.1/51/PV.22, 1996: 24).

[117] See A/C.1/49/PV.25 (1994: 6–7) and A/C.1/51/PV.22 (1996: 24).

[118] The point made by Egypt and Iran regarding the Middle Eastern participation linked the register issue to the wider arms control debate in the Middle East. As both the Arab states and Iran regarded the control of Israel's WMD arsenal as a fundamental diplomatic objective, references to poor Middle Eastern participation in the conventional arms register need to be seen against this background. Even though Israel and its policies were at the center of the Islamic Republic's general foreign policy argumentation, in the area of arms control it was the context of WMD in which the Iranians really began to focus on Israel. Iranian deliberations on conventional arms control contained relatively few remarks on Israel, and the Iranian statements that included comments on Israel usually repeated the Iranian position according to which Israel's arms policies fuelled and to a large extent caused the conventional arms racing in the Middle East (A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39).

In addition to the demands for a specific WMD category, the brief history of the UN arms register regime has been tinged with calls by some countries, for example, for the expansion of the register's original weapons categories and for the expansion of the register's scope to include military holdings and procurement from national production as well.[119] During the post-Gulf conflict years, Iran lent its support to the idea of broadening the register's original definitions of major conventional weapons[120] (A/C.1/49/PV.25, 1994: 7) and repeatedly underlined the necessity of including national holdings to the UN regime,[121] even though none of its own register reports between 1992–1996 contained so-called background information of the Islamic Republic's national military holdings.[122] Moreover, Iranian officials took the national holdings issue one step further by strongly arguing that the register should also contain quantitative and qualitative data on those armaments that were placed outside national territories through bilateral or multilateral security agreements.[123]

As regards the subject of procurement from national production, the Iranians were of the view that the efforts to expand the register in this respect should focus on major arms-producing countries' procurement activities. The Islamic Republic made a distinction between the arms production of the developed world's private companies and the developing countries' weapons manufacturing, and argued that it was above all the developed countries' national procurement from private companies that should be covered by the register regime, whereas developing countries' arms manufacturing ought to be internationally supported so that Third World states would gain self-sufficiency in arms production and be able to meet their minimum defence needs. Furthermore, Iran's arms control officials made calls for international assistance for developing countries' efforts to convert military facilities to civilian ones. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 12 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 20–21)

The second set of issues sparking Iranian dissatisfaction with the UN arms register had to do with the regime's operation. For one thing, the Islamic Republic claimed that international deliberations on the register regime and on transparency in armaments themselves were devoid of openness and transparency. In 1994, for example, Iran's

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[119] These two issues were high on the agenda during the first and the second UN review of the register's operation in 1994 and 1997, respectively. For a discussion of the 1994 and 1997 reviews, see Laurance and Wulf (1995: 557–567) and Kervers (1998: 2–5).
[120] For the original definitions, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1991* (1992: 59).
[121] See CD/PV.625 (1992: 6) and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 20).
[122] See <http//:www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>.
[123] See CD/PV.625 (1992: 6) and CD/PV.683 (1994: 19).

arms control officials argued that the selection process for the members of the first UN Group of Governmental Experts – appointed by the UN secretary-general and charged with the task of reviewing the arms register's operation[124] – had been completely non-transparent, and that the group's discussions had been held "behind closed doors." As a result, at first, Iran opposed diplomatic plans that called for the establishment of a new experts group to report on the register's operation and its further development in 1997, but in the end, in December 1994, voted for the 1997 review at the UN General Assembly. (CD/PV.683, 1994: 19; A/C.1/49/PV.25, 1994: 7–8 and Laurance and Wulf 1995: 567)

In spite of the positive vote, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic underlined that the diplomatic follow-up of the arms register should not be monopolized by the same major powers that were responsible for destabilizing arms transfers in the first place. Iran's willingness to reorganize the review mechanism was one manifestation of the Islamic Republic's position that all participants should have a say in the monitoring of the register regime. In the Iranian view, the CD, as the sole multilateral forum for arms control negotiations, should become the principal body for deliberations on transparency in armaments. The expert groups of the UN should only function as specialist bodies assisting the CD. (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6 and A/C.1/50/PV.22, 1995: 12)

Yet by 1996, the Iranians seemed to have acquiesced to the register regime's existing review mechanism. On 14 November that year, the Iranian representative addressing the UN General Assembly's First Committee implied that the deliberations on transparency in armaments at the CD had not brought about Iranian-desired results. Accordingly, the official said that his government was strongly of the opinion that the 1997 expert group reviewing the operation of the arms register should be established on the basis of equitable political and geographical representation. This diplomatic wish of Iran materialized, partly at least, in 1997, when a representative of the Islamic Republic took part for the first time in the work of an expert group of the register regime. (A/C.1/51/PV.22, 1996: 24)

For another thing, and independently of the Iranian criticism focusing on procedural matters, the representatives of the Islamic Republic claimed that the register regime had not altered states' behaviour in the area of international arms transfers. According to them, the UN register had neither been able to control destabilizing accumulation of

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[124] Experts from 23 governments took part in the work of the 1994 Group of Experts. Iran was not represented in the group.

conventional weapons in various parts of the world nor led to self-restraint in the transfer of such weaponry, in particular by the major conventional arms manufacturers (A/C.1/51/PV.13, 1996: 19 and A/C.1/51/PV.22, 1996: 24). Even though constantly pointing to the importance of measures that control conventional arms transfers, the Iranians added, the major powers continued to sign military contracts of huge proportions (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6). In fact, the officials of the Islamic Republic viewed the UN arms register's poor performance as an indication of the major powers' politically and commercially motivated efforts to obstruct advances in global conventional arms control (A/50/PV.5, 1995: 30).

Iran used the situation in the Persian Gulf as another example of the arms register's insignificance. Given that no Gulf Arab government had provided information to the UN register, the Islamic Republic argued, the regional efforts to promote transparency in armaments did not hold a bright future.[125] Iranian officials said that wide regional participation in the register regime would contribute to Gulf security, but simultaneously also noted that unilateral transparency measures could turn out to be harmful because they might "invite aggression." Thus, at first, Iran seemed to link its participation in the register regime with GCC states' behaviour, and with that of Saudi Arabia, in particular. In the end, however, the Islamic Republic decided to send information to the register regardless of GCC governments' responses. Iran submitted its first register report, for the calendar year 1992, on 15 November 1994.[126] (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 22; Zarif 1995: 125 and Chalmers and Greene 1995: 247)

The Islamic Republic provided register reports also for the rest of the post-Gulf conflict period, even if the Iranian submissions were regularly late. Thus, Iran's report for the calendar year 1993 was submitted in November 1994, for 1994 in December 1995, and for the calendar years 1995 and 1996 as late as in July 1997.[127] One reason

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[125] It should be noted that all Gulf Arab states – save Iraq that abstained – voted for the UN General Assembly resolution 46/36L that established the world organization's arms register. Between 1992–1996, however, no Gulf Arab government provided data to the register on its conventional arms transfers. Oman and Qatar did provide reports concerning the calendar year 1992 in 1993, but those reports contained no quantitative or qualitative data on the two countries' arms transfers. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1991*, 1992: 59) and <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>)

[126] See <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>.

[127] Ibid. Another problem related to the Iranian reports was that they contained only data concerning arms-exporting countries that had already submitted their own returns, although the information in Iran's and the exporters' reports was not always identical. Also, doubts were expressed over the credibility of the Islamic Republic's register reports. Especially in the case of missiles and missile-systems, the seventh arms category of the UN register, Iran was suspected of not having reported all relevant information about its transfers. (Arnett 1998a: 436 and Anthony and Jones 1998: 15, 28)

Iranian officials cited as having caused the delays was cooperation problems within the Iranian bureaucracy, especially on the part of the Islamic Republic's defence ministry (Arnett 1998a: 436, 446). As for the substance of Iran's register reports, Iranian authorities provided detailed data on the Islamic Republic's conventional arms imports as well as so-called "nil reports" on arms exports which indicated that Iran had not exported any of the weaponry covered by the register regime. Iran's reports did not contain any qualitative background information about the Islamic Republic's arms acquisitions. The only acquisition-related comment made in the reports was that Iran's imports were intended for replacement purposes.[128]

3.7.2.3 The inadequacy of transparency in armaments

Given Iran's reserved attitude towards the operation of the UN register, it was not surprising that in the post-Gulf conflict years, the representatives of the Islamic Republic made calls for more dramatic steps in the field of global conventional arms control. In Iran's view, there was an urgent need for effective arms control measures because the major arms-producing countries continued to pump conventional weaponry to different and especially to the conflict-ridden parts of the world (A/51/PV.32, 1996: 24). Again, developments in the Gulf region were used by Iranian officials as an example of the inability of international transparency efforts to curb the proliferation and dangerous accumulation of major conventional weapons. According to the Iranians, the fact that GCC governments were constantly induced and compelled into relying on foreign forces and purchasing huge amounts of military hardware from abroad testified to a general international pattern (Rafsanjani 1995: 700 and Zarif 1995: 122). Also, the officials of the Islamic Republic seemed to suggest that as part of their sales strategies, major weapons exporters sought to press arms-importing governments, such as those in the Gulf, to ignore and even torpedo arms control initiatives (A/CN.10/PV.181, 1993: 31 and Kharrazi 1994: 128).

Another strategy used by the major arms-manufacturing countries to promote their sales and politico-military influence worldwide, the Iranians maintained, was to fuel regional tensions and to create imaginary enemies. The way in which Western governments demonized the Islamic Republic and questioned the legitimacy of its rearmament program was told by Iranian authorities to be indicative of such schemes.

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[128] Ibid.

Consequently, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic sought to defend their government from charges of pursuing a massive rearmament program. First of all, they argued that Iran's conventional arms purchases were markedly low compared with those of other Gulf governments. According to Iranian calculations, the Islamic Republic allocated only an average of 1.6 percent of its GDP to national defence.[129] (Shahabi 1994: 279–280; A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28 and A/49/PV.5, 1994: 40)

Secondly, the Iranians maintained that the low level of their country's military expenditures indicated that the Islamic Republic's military intentions were purely defensive. As one Iranian diplomat assured in December 1992, Iran's military strength "has never been, and will never be, used for expansionism and aggression against others." Repeating the argument recorded in Iran's UN arms register reports, the representatives of the Islamic Republic said that the purpose of Iranian arms acquisitions was to replenish capabilities that had been lost in the Iran-Iraq war. Moreover, the Iranians argued that faced with turmoil and hostility on its western, northern, eastern, and southern borders, their country could not afford to overlook its security concerns and to ignore the maintenance of its defence capabilities. (A/47/PV.79, 1992: 73; Shahabi 1994: 279–280 and CD/PV.690, 1994: 13)

By speaking of the Islamic Republic's modest rearmament efforts and benign military intentions, Iranian authorities also wanted to signal that they were credible advocates of global control of conventional armaments. To promote this perception internationally, the Iranians presented a number of arms control initiatives – even if they did not seem to be interested in investing too much diplomatic energies on the details of such proposals. Iran's initiatives included calls for "comprehensive, non-selective, balanced and effective reduction of conventional arms" through global reduction of military budgets, weapons procurement, and the presence of foreign forces in various parts of the world (A/48/PV.14, 1993: 23 and A/48/PV.68, 1993: 17). In addition, the officials of the Islamic Republic alluded to the importance of arms control measures that would affect the supply of conventional weaponry, such as limiting the major powers' arms

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[129] It should be noted here that international observers viewed the figure provided by the Iranians as too low. For example, the estimates by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) were clearly higher. According to IISS, in 1993, Iran's defence expenditures constituted some 3.4 percent of the country's GDP and in 1994 some 3.8 percent. In 1995, some 4.8 percent of the Islamic Republic's GDP was allocated to defence, whereas in 1996 the figure was 5 percent. (*The Military Balance 1995/96*, 1995: 265 and *The Military Balance 1997/98*, 1997: 294)

manufacturing or pressuring key arms-producing countries to curb their export activities[130] (A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 15 and A/C.1/50/PV.11, 1995: 13).

3.8 The Khatami Presidency

Muhammad Khatami's victory in the Iranian presidential election of May 1997 marked the beginning of the fourth discernible phase in the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control policy since the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Even though president Khatami's political program focused primarily on domestic issues, the introduction by the Khatami administration of a new vocabulary in Iran's political language left a mark in the Islamic Republic's international relations as well. But as the case of arms control illustrates, the changes in the political language often did not translate into changes in Iran's actual diplomatic positions. As a consequence, Islamic Iran's arms control stances under president Khatami were highly congruent with those of the Rafsanjani administration. At the same time, however, one should not underestimate the fact that the Khatami government's conciliatory foreign policy argumentation increased the credibility of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations both regionally and internationally.

3.8.1 Global security networking

During the Rafsanjani presidency, Iran's attempts to improve its relations with the outside world had stemmed primarily from the domestic needs generated by Iran's eight-year war against Iraq. While the Islamic Republic's severe economic and other societal problems necessitated the Khatami administration to pursue a pragmatic foreign policy course, too, what distinguished the tenures of the two Iranian presidents from each other was the fact that the Khatami period brought about a reassessment of the ideological fundaments that had guided Iran's foreign policy orientation ever since the 1979 revolution. In other words, president Khatami not only followed the diplomatic footsteps of his predecessor, but also took one step further by developing and

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[130] Related to this point, Iranian officials also argued that it would be necessary to strengthen the UN arms register by including transfers of high technology with military applications in it (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 21).

advocating the adoption of a new set of ideological pillars to steer his country's diplomatic efforts.

The notion of "dialogue among civilizations" became the key catchword of Iranian foreign policy during the Khatami period. Under this discursive rubric, Iran's representatives signalled that the Islamic Republic was prepared to break away from the confrontational aspects of its foreign policy, to reintegrate itself into the family of nations, and to struggle against disintegrating tendencies in the international system through the promotion of dialogue and cooperation within and between civilizations.[131] At the same time, the Khatami administration studiously emphasized that the Islamic Republic's efforts in this respect were guided by three fundamental principles, namely, dignity, wisdom, and interest. Put differently, the authorities of the Islamic Republic said that they would ensure that their country's foreign policy would not compromise the dignity of the Iranian nation, that it would be based on the core values of the Iranian society, and that it would focus on advancing Iran's national interests (Kharrazi 1997: 2 and Nejad-Hosseinian 1998: 1–2).

On 2 February 1999, at the CD, Iran introduced the notion of "global security networking" and defined it as the "security interpretation of the concept of dialogue among civilizations." Hoping to impress a new concept upon the multilateral diplomatic debate on security and arms control, Iranian officials sought to draw diplomatic attention to issues their government viewed as undermining international peace and security. Thus, on the one hand, the Khatami administration was highly critical of major power dominance of international arms control arenas. The representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that all members of the community of states should be on an equal level and entitled to take part in discussions and negotiations dealing with international security and arms control. On the other hand, the Iranians strongly rejected what they described as the division of the international community into two distinct groupings: those who enjoyed the protection of military alliances and state-of-the-art armaments and those who were classified as threats to international peace and security and whose security concerns were completely ignored. (Kharrazi 1999: 492; A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25 and CD/PV.812, 1999: 3)

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[131] Of course, Khatami's concept of dialogue among civilizations was directed to the domestic Iranian audience as well. Above all, it sought to point out to the Iranian people that they would benefit from dialogue and cooperation with other members of the international community. By learning to understand the strengths and weaknesses of other nations and cultures, Khatami's argument went, the Iranian society

The notion of global security networking was put forward by Iranian officials as a remedy for what president Khatami characterized as "domination, unilateralism, confrontation and exclusion" in the international system. The Iranians argued that if states were ready to adopt the concept of global security networking and to share its fundamental assumption according to which the security of one group could not be achieved without the security of the other, they would be able to abandon the doctrine of the balance of power and their reliance on military blocs.[132] The Khatami administration stressed that global security networking was a mechanism that based on inclusion and participation,[133] a mechanism that used existing security and arms control arrangements to promote cooperation instead of competition. Thus, the officials of the Islamic Republic did not question the legitimacy of existing security and arms control instruments but challenged the modes of thought that sustained prevailing security policies – that is, the "doctrines and policies of the arms race" and "pseudo-scientific theories of clash and conflict between nations and civilizations," as one Iranian representative described them. (A/53/PV.8, 1998: 7; CD/PV.812, 1999: 3, 6 and A/54/PV.12, 1999: 12)

The Khatami administration's paradigmatic deliberations did not bring about changes in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic positions on individual issues pertaining to international control of conventional armaments. Thus, under president Khatami, the Islamic Republic continued to call for the adoption of multilateral diplomatic measures aimed at arresting the global conventional arms race. In addition to making specific calls for the reduction of military expenditures, national arms arsenals, and international weapons transfers, Iran's representatives referred to the need to control the manufacturing of conventional weapons, especially that of the major arms-producing countries. Without meaningful steps in the area of conventional arms control, the Khatami administration argued, mistrust and anxiety in the international system would increase and the limited financial resources of the world's poorest countries would

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– and the Islamic civilization at large – would be able to restore its vitality and to find solutions to its existing problems.

[132] As specified by one Iranian representative: "This new security paradigm [global security networking] starts with the proposition that security is the indivisible need and demand of the entire human race. [...] thus, the adoption of security enhancement by one country or coalition is not tantamount to loss or deprivation for others. Rather, as with components of any network, measures by any group to enhance its security augment the security of the entire network and all its members." (Zarif 1999: 4)

[133] Interestingly, in this connection, the Khatami administration pointed to the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations in international arms control efforts. In the Iranian opinion, NGO could play an instrumental role in global security networking (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 6 and A/54/PV.12, 1999: 11, 13).

continue to be wasted on military expenses.[134] (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21 A/CN.10/PV.222, 1998: 16 and A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 5)

Restating the position already adopted by the Rafsanjani administration, the Khatami government noted that transparency in armaments provided a necessary, even if a modest, starting point for global control of conventional weapons. The Iranians continued to express their diplomatic support for the UN Conventional Arms Register, although the Khatami administration did not submit a national register report for the calendar year 1997 and refrained from further returns after its 1998 report.[135] These reporting omissions may have been linked to Iran's general criticism of the UN register's scope and operation, for the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to demand that the arms register should be expanded to cover WMD, together with high technology with military applications, and fortified such demands with their voting behaviour at the UN. Furthermore, the Iranians continued to emphasize that there was no evidence that the register regime had led to self-restraint in the transfer of conventional armaments, especially on the part of the major arms suppliers. (A/C.1/52.PV.11, 1997: 21; A/C.1/52/PV.23, 1997: 6 and A/C.1/53/PV.24, 1998: 4)

Having the Persian Gulf in mind, Iranian officials also asked why there were no rigorous international efforts to promote full regional participation in the arms register, especially in regions with a record of massive arms purchases.[136] According to the Iranians, diplomatic indifference to regional participation in the register regime was one of the reasons why the 1997 Group of Experts was unable to make substantive

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[134] Yet, at the same time, the Iranians regularly pointed out that the correct marching order in international arms control diplomacy should always be kept in mind: conventional arms control was secondary in importance to the control of WMD. Take, for example, the following Iranian remark: "The imperative of nuclear disarmament should under no circumstances be overshadowed by the ongoing negotiations and deliberations on conventional weapons" (A/52/PV.47, 1997: 17). Also, the Iranian statement that international arms control efforts should be built on past achievements and especially on the final document of the UN General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), held in 1978, was indicative of Iran's priorities (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 22). The final document of SSOD I raised nuclear weapons and other WMD to the center of international arms control diplomacy. For the document's content, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1978* (1981: 39–49).

[135] Iran submitted an arms register report for the calendar year 1998 on 28 September 1999. According to the report, in 1998 the Islamic Republic had imported the following items from Russia: four T-72 battle tanks, three BMP-2 armoured combat vehicles, two large calibre artillery systems (140mm) and two unspecified items belonging to the weapon category of missiles and missile launchers. Some observers suspected that there might have been a connection between the Khatami administration's hesitation to provide reports on the Islamic Republic's conventional arms transfers and the fact that China, one of Iran's most important arms suppliers, had declined – since its 1997 report which had dealt with the calendar year 1996 – to provide register replies to the world organization. (A/54/226/Add.1, 1999: 4 and Chalmers and Greene 1999: 4–5)

[136] Iran and Qatar were the only Persian Gulf states that at least once provided data to the UN arms register during the tenure of the Khatami administration. Qatar submitted national register reports for the calendar years 1997 and 1999. (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/index.htm>)

recommendations to the UN General Assembly with regard to the arms register's development.[137] (A/C.1/52/PV.23, 1997: 6–7 and A/C.1/53/PV.24, 1998: 4)

3.8.2 Détente, dialogue, and confidence-building in the Persian Gulf

The main focus of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy under president Khatami was on the Persian Gulf region. The Khatami administration constantly pointed out that Iran's Gulf policy had three core objectives: détente, dialogue, and confidence-building. According to Iranian officials, the objectives were widely shared by the various factions of the Islamic Republic's political elite[138] and reflected their country's desire to build peace and promote mutual understanding and cooperation in the region. Declaring that Gulf security was the single most important issue on Iran's foreign policy agenda, the Khatami administration put a major emphasis on arms control in its Gulf diplomacy. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25 and Kharrazi 1998a: 145)

The establishment of an indigenous regional security system in the Persian Gulf remained the principal objective in the Islamic Republic's security argumentation. For example, in September 1998, at the UN, president Khatami invited Iran's Gulf Arab neighbours to establish a joint security system in the region.[139] The Iranian president also restated his country's condemnation of the presence of foreign, and particularly U.S., military forces in the Persian Gulf and characterized such a presence as an insult to the regional states. (A/53/PV.8, 1998:7 and *IRNA,* 25 April 2000)

Referring to what they portrayed as the adverse consequences of foreign military presence in the Gulf – including regional tension, instability, and militarization[140] – the

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[137] The Khatami administration reiterated Iran's position that the Islamic Republic would be ready to consider any diplomatic suggestion for starting negotiations on transparency in armaments at the CD, provided that such proposals would promote greater transparency in WMD and high-tech conventional armaments (A/C.1/53/PV.24, 1998: 4).

[138] During his visit to Qatar in May 2000, for example, Iran's foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi stated that there was a consensus among all political factions in the Islamic Republic over the fundaments of the country's Gulf policy (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 1 May 2000).

[139] During the Khatami presidency, Iran's arms control officials continued to include Iraq in the Iranian-visioned Gulf security system. Nevertheless, due to the Islamic Republic's and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' suspicions of the intentions of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in practice, Iran's calls for regional security cooperation in the Gulf continued to be directed at GCC governments. Moreover, it should be noted that the Khatami administration did not deem it necessary that all the regional countries would take part in the proposed security arrangement right from the beginning. Foreign minister Kharrazi, for example, stated that it sufficed if the outstanding countries would prepare themselves for participation and join the arrangement later at an appropriate juncture. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25 and *IRNA,* 24 January 2000)

[140] According to Ali Shamkhani, the Khatami administration's defence minister, the foreign military forces in the Gulf aimed, among others, at "ruining relations between the regional governments" (*IRNA,* 25 April 2000). Iran's foreign minister Kharrazi, in turn, stated that the military presence of the United

Islamic Republic's political and military leadership demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region. In the Iranian view, the regional states were fully capable of arriving at an indigenous arrangement for Gulf security, in addition to which Iran's representatives argued that Iran's military capabilities could serve as a guarantee for regional security and declared their country's readiness to put its capabilities at GCC countries' disposal. The Islamic Republic's offers to help Oman to modernize its defence system and to provide technological know-how to the Omani air force were among Iran's defence cooperation initiatives.[141] (Kharrazi 1997: 4; *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 1 May 2000 and 18 July 2000 and *IRNA,* 8 April 2000)

However, president Khatami and his lieutenants acknowledged that the materialization of a regional security arrangement in the Gulf was a distant scenario,[142] and therefore, relied on a diplomatic approach that divided Gulf security cooperation into various stages. The defence minister of the Islamic Republic was among the Iranian officials explicating such a division. According to Ali Shamkhani, the Persian Gulf states should start their security cooperation with different kinds of CBM and then gradually move, step-by step, towards "more sensitive stages of security cooperation" (Eisenstadt 1998: 76).

Consequently, the Khatami administration attempted actively to promote diplomatic dialogue on CBM between Iran and GCC governments as well as the actual implementation of such measures. Of Iran's Gulf Arab neighbours, Oman was the most favourable soil for the Khatami administration's diplomatic overtures. In the first place, the navies of the Islamic Republic and Oman conducted reciprocal port visits – a practice already familiar from the Rafsanjani period (ibid.: 94). Secondly, representatives from the two countries' armed forces participated in each other's military exercises as observers. Such exchanges were speeded up by a bilateral Iranian-

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States in the Gulf was "worse than the security problems that stemmed from the two devastating wars in the region [...]" (*IRNA,* 24 January 2000). Curiously, under president Khatami, Iran's discussion of the consequences of foreign military presence in the Gulf included a new theme, namely the pollution of the Persian Gulf, which, Iranian officials claimed, was mainly caused by the U.S. naval vessels (*IRNA*, 29 February 2000 and Eisenstadt 1998: 75).

[141] The central role the Iranians envisioned for their armed forces in the Gulf security system was related to the traditional Iranian perception that their country was a key regional player. Note, for example, the speech by the Islamic Republic's UN ambassador in June 1998 in which he postulated that Iran was "the hinge of security and stability" not only in the Persian Gulf but also in the wider region consisting of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Indian subcontinent (Nejad-Hosseinian 1998: 2).

[142] In January 2000, for example, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic admitted that "it may be the case that the formation of this [security] apparatus for the time being would not be possible in practice [...]." Simultaneously, however, he underlined that it was important that the regional states would adopt the idea of a regional security system as the ultimately objective. (*IRNA*, 24 January 2000)

Omani agreement on military observers signed in Tehran in November 1998. The accord reportedly provided that the two countries would send observers to each other's military exercises on an annual basis (*IRNA,* 9 April 2000). After the signing of the November 1998 accord, Omani representatives observed at least Iran's Vahdat-77 naval exercise of December 1998 in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman (*Jane's Defence Weekly,* 9 December 1998), the Vahdat-78 naval exercise of February–March 2000 in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz (*IRNA,* 23 February 2000), and the Vahdat-79 naval exercise in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz at the end of the same year (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 29 October 2000). In a similar manner, representatives from the Islamic Republic observed Omani military manoeuvres (Corless 1999: 3 and *The Middle East Military Balance 1999–2000,* 2000: 184).

Iranian authorities also made it known to Oman that the Islamic Republic would be willing to take the military cooperation between the two countries to a more ambitious level. Defence minister Shamkhani, among others, stated that Iran would place no restrictions on its security cooperation with Oman (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 14 November 1998). As a consequence, diplomatic talks between Iran and Oman touched, among others, upon the issue of joint military exercises (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 6 August 1998). The Iranians noted that regional military exercises in the Persian Gulf would undermine the false perception vigorously marketed by the enemies of the Islamic Republic that Iran was a threat to the region's security and stability (Corless 1999: 3).[143]

In the end, however, Iranian-Omani talks on joint military exercises did not lead to concrete arrangements, for Oman regarded CBM as a sufficient form of security cooperation with the Islamic Republic and ruled out more ambitious forms of security interaction. The Omani stance became clear in April 2000, after Iran and Oman had

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[143] According to the commander of the regular Iranian navy, joint military operations between the Islamic Republic and its GCC neighbours would "restore peace and stability to the Persian Gulf region" (*Xinhua,* 4 March 2000). As far as the Islamic Republic's own naval exercises were concerned, Iranian officials attached a message of peace to those manoeuvres. For example, during the Vahdat-78 and Vahdat-79 naval exercises, Iran's military representatives stated that the main message of the war games was "peace and security in light of unity among regional countries" (*IRNA,* 28 February 2000 and *BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 29 October 2000). Iranian officials also maintained that the Islamic Republic had changed the code-names of its naval operations – from "Victory" to "Unity" (Vahdat) – in order to convey the message of peace and cooperation in the region (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 4 December 1998). Finally, the Iranians claimed that unlike the foreign naval forces that were patrolling the Persian Gulf, the Islamic Republic's naval forces had done everything possible to avoid harming the marine environment of the Persian Gulf (Eisenstadt 1998: 75).

signed a bilateral agreement in Tehran dealing with the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Commenting on the interpretations made of that agreement by some Arab commentators, a senior official of the Omani foreign ministry crystallized his government's position: "There is neither security nor defence agreement [between Oman and Iran]. If there is need for such an agreement, then such a need must be addressed within the GCC as a group and Iran as a neighbouring state. That is if there is any need for such thing." (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 16 April 2000 and 24 April 2000)

The Khatami administration raised the issue of joint naval exercises also in its bilateral talks with Kuwait (*The Middle Eastern Balance 1999–2000,* 2000: 184). However, Kuwaiti authorities declined the Iranian offers, and the security cooperation between the two countries was confined to so-called low-security issues, such as drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime. Iran and Kuwait signed a bilateral agreement dealing with domestic security issues in October 2000 (*AFP*, 3 October 2000). Iran's security relations with Qatar remained modest as well, for the Qatari government did not warm to the Islamic Republic's security initiatives which included calls for joint military training and exercises. Resultantly, security discussions between the two parties were limited to issues such as the exchange of military attachés and delegations (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 18 July 2000). Security cooperation between Iran and Bahrain remained at a rudimentary level, too, whereas the Islamic Republic's security dialogue with the United Arab Emirates was blocked altogether by the on-going dispute between the two governments over the control of the Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs.[144]

Improved relations between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia, the most influential GCC state, were the most significant aspect of the Khatami administration's détente policy in the Gulf.[145] Nevertheless, the advances made by the two countries in political, economic, and cultural cooperation did not translate into far-reaching security interaction. Iranian naval vessels did pay port visits to Saudi Arabia at least in March

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[144] For a discussion of the islands dispute, which had escalated already in the early 1990s as a result of Iran's actions in Abu Musa, see Schofield (1997: 142–156) and Marschall (2003: 121–137).

[145] Given that Saudi Arabia was the leading power in the GCC, improved bilateral relations with the Saudi government were a prerequisite for the realization of Iran's foreign policy objectives – such as the containment of Iraq, the reaching of an agreement among the Gulf states on harmonized oil policies, and the increase of GCC investments in the Iranian economy – in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia's readiness to warm up relations with the Islamic Republic stemmed primarily from the country's economic problems as well as from the deterioration of the Middle East peace process and the emergence of a Turkish-Israeli

1998 and early 1999 (Eisenstadt 1998: 75 and Corless 1999: 3), in addition to which high-ranking military and civilian officials from the two states met each other both in Iran and Saudi Arabia. During the Saudi defence minister's visit to Tehran in the spring of 1999, for example, Iran briefed Saudi military officials about the Islamic Republic's defence capabilities, and the two parties agreed to exchange military attachés (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 10 May 1999). In the course of the Iranian defence minister's visit to Saudi Arabia a year later, the first visit by a senior Iranian defence official to Saudi Arabia since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Islamic Republic's military delegation was informed about the various aspects of Saudi Arabia's defence system (*BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 1 May 2000).

Still, in the end, the implementation of more dramatic CBM between the two parties did not take place. As a result, the subsequent rounds of Iranian-Saudi security talks centered around low-security issues and the conclusion of a bilateral agreement similar to the one between the Islamic Republic and Kuwait.[146] In fact, Saudi authorities did not hesitate to publicly dash Iran's hopes for the creation of an indigenous security arrangement in the Gulf. As stated by Saudi Arabia's defence minister, "direct cooperation with Iran to protect the Gulf is out of the question." (*Itar-Tass,* 23 April 2000; *BBC Monitoring Middle East,* 15 February 2001 and *Reuters,* 27 April 2000)

But even if the Iranians failed to convince their Gulf Arab neighbours of the benefits of deeper regional security cooperation, they did not refrain from presenting and advocating their views of Gulf security and regional arms control. Hence, the Iranians repeatedly expressed their interest in signing defence pacts with individual GCC countries[147] and continued to question the wisdom of those countries' security arrangements with Western governments, and particularly with the United States. According to foreign minister Kharrazi, "purchase of security through reliance on foreign powers" had only led to the strengthening of extra-regional powers' presence and influence in the Persian Gulf (Kharrazi 2000a: 1). Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to point, among others, to the destabilizing impact that the

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alliance sealed in the February 1996 military cooperation agreement between the two parties. (Marschall 2003: 59, 142–143)

[146] The Iranian-Saudi agreement dealing mainly with drug trafficking and terrorism was ultimately signed in Tehran in April 2001.

[147] President Khatami, for example, stated in February 1999 that the Islamic Republic was ready to sign defence pacts with the regional states. This Iranian desire was also expressed by many high-ranking military representatives of the Islamic Republic. As the commander of the regular Iranian navy stated after the Vahdat-78 naval exercise in March 2000: "We have announced our readiness to ink defence accords with regional countries." (*IRNA,* 18 February 1999 and *Xinhua,* 4 March 2000)

massive conventional arms transfers to the Persian Gulf had on the region, made calls for full regional participation in the UN conventional weapons register,[148] and proposed cuts to the Gulf countries' defence budgets.[149] In addition, Iranian authorities stressed that their government "warmly welcomes and in fact promotes" any regional initiative that aims to strengthen peace and security in the Persian Gulf region. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25; A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21 and A/53/PV.12, 1998: 46)

All in all, then, the Khatami administration's Gulf-related arms control operations strongly relied on the diplomatic foundation built during the Rafsanjani presidency. The continuity in Iran's policies in the Gulf meant that in spite of the general normalization of relations between Iran and GCC countries in the Khatami years, a process that had gained momentum during the final months of the Rafsanjani presidency and was significantly speeded up by the Khatami administration's friendly gestures to the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms, a number issues continued to burden Iranian–GCC security relations. One of such issues was the continued U.S. military presence in the Gulf.[150] And still, the fact that the Khatami administration's diplomatic message of détente, dialogue, and confidence-building evoked positive responses from GCC governments meant that the Islamic Republic's hopes for the institutionalization of the confidence- and security-building efforts in the region were not necessarily excessive.[151]

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[148] When referring to the poor regional participation in the UN arms register, Iranian officials argued that Israel's "militarism" was a major reason for the Persian Gulf countries' reluctance to submit data on their arms transfers to the UN. Pointing to the wider Middle Eastern context, Hashimi Rafsanjani, the chairman of the Islamic Republic's Expediency Council, even maintained that arms racing in the Middle East would not end "while Israel is present." (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21 and Rafsanjani 2000: 3)

[149] In this connection, the Iranians wanted to "frankly and sincerely" inform that of all the Middle Eastern countries, Iran allocated the lowest GDP percentage to national armed forces. In September 1997, foreign minister Kharrazi said that in 1995 and 1996, the Islamic Republic's military expenditures had constituted 3.3 percent of the country's GDP. Compared with the official Iranian estimates dating from the Rafsanjani period, the figures presented by Kharrazi came closer to the estimates made by outside observers. The representatives of the Khatami administration also emphasized that Iran's arms acquisitions were intended purely for defensive purposes. As noted by president Khatami himself: "[...] we have no intention for aggression. Indeed, we have no intention to invade others, nor do we see this a right thing to do in light of our fundamental principles and policies." At the same time, however, the Iranians did not fail to point out that their country had every right to develop its defence capabilities. The development of the Islamic Republic's defence capabilities, Iranian officials argued, was necessitated by the tension and instability in Iran's immediate neighbourhood. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25; Khatami 1999: 3 and Zarif 1999: 2–3)

[150] Of course, there were more fundamental factors that ultimately defined the nature of Iranian–GCC security relations. Geopolitical realities, demographic factors, and the Islamic Republic's turbulent domestic political scene made it inevitable for the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms to view Iran as a potential threat to their national security.

3.9 Iran and Micro-Disarmament

In January 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the secretary-general of the UN, introduced the concept of micro-disarmament to the international arms control debate.[152] With this concept, he wanted to draw the attention of the community of states to the control of the tools of violence that accounted for most deaths in contemporary armed conflicts: anti-personnel mines, assault rifles, and other types of small arms. The fact that internal conflicts,[153] as opposed to inter-state wars, had become a key feature of the post-Cold War world's conflict scene was the main reason that the concept of micro-disarmament found resonance among governments and became a central issue on the international arms control agenda.

From Iran's point of view, the rise of the micro-disarmament debate in the mid-1990s was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, increased international attention on the disastrous humanitarian and social consequences of APM enabled Iran, a badly mine-infested country, to more effectively seek external help for its own landmine problem. On the other hand, the authorities of the Islamic Republic ultimately adopted a reserved diplomatic attitude towards multilateral deliberations on the control of APM and other small arms because they feared that micro-disarmament could weaken Iran's military ability to defend itself. Moreover, while not publicly admitting it, the Iranians did not want that international small arms control measures would place limits to their country's domestic weapons production and to the Islamic Republic's commercially and politically motivated small arms transfers abroad.

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[151] For an expression of the Iranian wish for institutionalized confidence- and security-building mechanisms in the Persian Gulf region, see Kharrazi (2000: 1).

[152] For Boutros-Ghali's discussion of micro-disarmament, see (A/50/60, 1995: 14–15).

[153] Following Brown (1996: 1), internal conflicts can be defined as "violent or potentially violent political disputes whose origins can be traced primarily to domestic rather than systemic factors, and where armed violence takes place or threatens to take place primarily within the borders of a single state." According to the study by Wallensteen and Sollenberg (1997: 339), between 1989–1996, only six out of the total of 101 armed conflicts in the world involved the territory and the armed forces of more than one state.

3.9.1 The control of anti-personnel mines[154]

Multilateral diplomatic efforts to control APM have mainly resulted from the international community's desire to alleviate the humanitarian problems caused by the global landmine crisis.[155] APM pose a great threat to the peoples of war-torn countries not only during armed conflicts but also after the hostilities have ended. In addition to killing and maiming both combatants and civilians, landmines obstruct the economic and social development of mine-infested states and cause damage to those countries' environmental resources. Moreover, APM cause displacement, inhibit the movement of refugees and internally displaced persons, and also make it difficult for international organizations and aid agencies to alleviate the sufferings of mine victims on the field.[156]

As far as Iran's mine-related arms control operations were concerned, the representatives of the Islamic Republic regularly referred to the negative implications of the global landmine problem and acknowledged that "uncleared APMs pose one of the most serious humanitarian challenges facing the world today" (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 12–13 and A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24). But while supporting and calling for international cooperation in the clearance of APM in various parts of the world, the Iranians focused on discussing their own country's landmine problem. According to the Islamic Republic's officials, some 16 million landmines[157] had been laid in those parts of the Iranian territory occupied by Iraq at the various stages of the 1980–1988 war, covering more than four million hectares of Iranian soil.[158] The Iranians emphasized that apart

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[154] The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction of 1997 – the so-called Ottawa Convention or Mine-Ban Treaty (MBT) – defines an APM as a mine "designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons" (see article 2[1] of the convention). APM contain 10 to 250 g of explosive substance and detonate under low pressure. They are produced in four categories: directional, fragmentation or omni-directional, bounding, and blast. (Goldblat 1999: 9 and Smith 1996: 275–276)

[155] It is estimated that there are some 60–70 million landmines scattered within at least 70 countries around the world (*Hidden Killers* 1998).

[156] For a discussion of the various aspects of the global landmine problem, see ibid. For a discussion focusing on the medical consequences of APM, see Coupland (1997).

[157] Although the accuracy of the official Iranian estimate on the number APM laid in the country during the Iran-Iraq war may be doubtful, the fact remains that, in numerical terms, Iran is the most heavily-mined country in the world after Egypt (*Strategic Comments 1997*: 1).

[158] The suggestion by the authorities of the Islamic Republic that Iraq's armed forces alone were responsible for the uncleared APM in Iranian territory blurs the fact that, during the Iran-Iraq war, both warring parties used APM extensively for tactical purposes. In the early stages of the war, it was the Iranians who resorted to large-scale use of landmines in order to stop Iraq's advances. However, as the Iranians started to get the upper hand in the conflict, it was Iraq's turn to rely on APM. Initially, Iraq had used mines to defend its territorial gains inside Iran and to gain more leeway in the deployment of its troops on the front. After the Iranians managed to force Iraq to go on the defensive, the Iraqis started a massive mining campaign in order to block Iran's offensives. From a military point of view, Iraq's use of

from the physical and material damages caused by APM during the war, uncleared landmines had taken enormous expanses of Iran's agricultural land out of production and rendered them uninhabitable. Moreover, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that civilians – villagers, farmers, and shephards – living in Iran's mine-infested areas continued to be occasionally killed or maimed by uncleared mines. In November 1998, the Iranian representative addressing the UN General Assembly stated that since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, more than 1,500 Iranians had been killed and more than 7,000 maimed or injured by APM.[159] (A/49/PV.44, 1994: 25; A/51/PV.74, 1996: 7 and A/53/PV.60, 1998: 24)

Iranian authorities' post-war efforts to clear the country's mine-infected areas had been only partially successful. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, during the ten-year period of 1988–1998, the governmental agencies responsible for mine-action – including the ministry of the interior, the foreign ministry, and various branches of the Islamic Republic's armed forces (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000) – had managed to clear some 6.2 million APM and other "unexploded devices" dating from the war period (A/53/PV.60, 1998: 24).[160] The Iranians maintained that the slow progress made in mine-clearance had resulted from two main factors: first, from the absence of documentation regarding the location of the mine-fields in the Iranian

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APM turned out to be highly successful, for due to the lack of mine-clearance technology, Iran had major problems in breaking Iraq's mine defences. The fact that Iranian troops often detonated APM by jumping upon them or by using sticks to activate them testified to the Iranian leadership's readiness to accept a high number of casualties to compensate the absence of mine-clearance equipment. Few of the mines used either by Iran or Iraq during the war were marked or mapped, and the great majority of the war-time minefields remained uncleared. (Cordersman and Wagner 1990: 448–450 and *Anti-Personnel Landmines – Friend or Foe? 1998*)

[159] In January 2000, "The High Center for Research and Informatics" (HCRI) – an Iranian organization affiliated with the Foundation for the Disabled and Oppressed, one of the country's most important revolutionary foundations – conducted a survey of landmine casualties in the Iranian province of Ilam bordering Iraq. According to the survey, Ilam had the most serious mine problem in western Iran, whereas Mihran, Dihluran, and Musian were the most mine-contaminated cities in the Ilam province. Of the 394 civilians died because of landmines in Ilam in 1989–1999, 98 were under the age of 20. Shepherds were another population group particularly vulnerable to uncleared APM. Other heavily mine-infested areas in western and southwestern Iran are located in the provinces of Khuzistan, Kirmanshah, Kurdistan, and West Azarbaijan. (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000)

[160] The figures given by Iranian officials regarding the cleared mines were not uniform. In 1994, the Iranians said that they had "neutralized and destroyed" 6 million APM since the end of the Iran-Iraq war (A/49/PV.44, 1994: 25). In 1995 and 1996, in turn, the officials of the Islamic Republic stated that Iran had succeeded in neutralizing more than one third of all the "mines and sub-munitions" laid in the country during the "imposed" war (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13 and A/51/PV.74, 1996: 7). Finally, a year later, in 1997, Iranian officials only spoke of "a significant number of mines and unexploded devices" destroyed (A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24). For the most part, the Iranians had conducted their mine-clearance operations manually, although mechanical methods had been employed as well. Iran is reported to have been able to domestically produce an unmanned, remotely operated mine-clearance vehicle called Taftan-1. (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000)

territory, and secondly, from the lack of modern mine-detection and -clearance equipment (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13 and A/51/PV.74, 1996: 7).

Consequently, the alleviation of the landmine problem in Iran through international assistance and cooperation became a key objective of the Islamic Republic's APM diplomacy. Iranian officials argued that as a first step towards the amelioration of the global APM crisis, the international community should gather and disseminate detailed information about the extent of the landmine problem in various parts of the developing world, including Iran itself. In the Iranian view, those states that had laid landmines in foreign territories had a special responsibility to provide maps, records, and documentation on APM to mine-infested countries and to the UN. Iran lent its support for the world organization's efforts to create a comprehensive APM database and demanded that the database should contain information about the advanced mine-clearance technology internationally available as well as about the restrictions that prevented mine-infested countries from obtaining such technology. (A/49/PV.44, 1994: 25 and A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13)

Indeed, Iranian officials were highly vocal about the problems pertaining to mine-clearance technology transfers to the developing world. They argued that due to the lack of political will on the part of developed countries, manifested in "discriminatory and unjustified" export-control arrangements, no serious international attempt had been made to provide mine-infested countries with state-of-the-art mine-clearance technology. The Iranians insisted that international efforts to ban APM should be accompanied by technological assistance to mine-infested states as well as to the mine-action programs of the UN.[161] In the Iranian opinion, the member states of the UN should empower the world organization to ensure that no restrictions were applied to impede developing countries' access to mine-clearance technology. Also, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the governments in possession of advanced detection and clearance technology should inform the UN of the kind of contribution they could make to the world organization's mine-action programs. (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13 and A/53/PV.60, 1998: 24–25)

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[161] By technological assistance, Iranian authorities meant not only mine-detection and -clearance equipment but also the technological know-how that would enable mine-infested countries to domestically produce such equipment. In 1995, in connection with the review conference of the so-called Inhumane Weapons Convention of 1981, for example, Iran's representatives insisted that the state parties should transfer technology to mine-infested countries for the production of self-destructing mines (*IRNA*, 11 October 1995).

Generally, the Islamic Republic viewed the UN as the focal point for international mine-action and APM control efforts.[162] In addition to pointing out that the world organization had a special responsibility to facilitate mine-clearance technology transfers, the officials of the Islamic Republic also emphasized that the UN should encourage, plan, and coordinate research on mine-clearance technologies.[163] Moreover, the Iranians demanded that developed countries should allocate more financial assistance to the mine-programs of the UN as well as to individual states that suffered from landmines.[164] (A/C.1/51/PV.21, 1996: 2 and A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24)

Iran itself was among the countries that had requested international assistance in mine-clearance and welcomed any help in this regard from the UN, individual governments, and NGO. In 1996, the Islamic Republic began discussions with the UN Development Programme for the preparation of a national mine-action program. The parties agreed on a pilot project on the clearing and marking of minefields in western Iran in 1997, but the actual implementation of the project failed to proceed presumably due to budgetary constraints on the Iranian side. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic made it known that the UN had agreed to send a mission to Iran to map out the country's mine situation.[165] (A/53/PV.60, 1998: 25; *Landmine Monitor Report 1999,* 1999: 885 and *Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000)

But while welcoming international mine-action assistance, Iranian authorities also carefully defined the nature and the limits of the cooperation with foreign parties. The Iranians stressed that international mine-action programs should be carried out so that

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[162] For the role of the UN in international mine-action efforts, see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/mine/index.html>.

[163] Iran claimed that the poor state of research on mine-clearance technologies forced developing countries to base their clearance efforts on technologies almost identical with those employed already in the 1940s (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13).

[164] Iran's diplomatic statements on landmines often pointed to the fact that mine-clearance is a highly expensive enterprise. Whereas the price of an APM can be less than $2, the same APM may cost between $300–1000 to clear. Furthermore, it should be noted that besides highlighting the role of the UN in international mine-action and APM control efforts, the Islamic Republic recognized the importance of the participation of NGO in such efforts. Take, for example, the following Iranian statement made in 1997: "It is encouraging to note that during the past two years efforts in the field of mine-action programmes by the United Nations, individual countries and non-governmental organizations have been intensified [...]." (A/50/PV.91, 1995: 13; A/49/357, 1994: 2, 7 and A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24)

[165] The first known Iranian conference on the country's landmine problem was organized in Tehran on 15–16 February 2000. The conference, entitled "The First International Conference on Landmine Victim Assistance during Peace Period," was organized by the HCRI, with the help of the Trauma Care Foundation of Norway and the World Health Organization. As far as Iranian mine victim assistance and consciousness-raising programs were concerned, the HCRI was reported to have planned to conduct a pilot study on such programs. The same organization had reportedly also presented a project on mine victim assistance to the Islamic Republic's health ministry as well as to the Norwegian foreign ministry. (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000 and <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/mine/index.html>)

they would respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and equality of states, and that such programs should not be used as a pretext to interfere with the target states' internal affairs. The officials of the Islamic Republic also noted that even though the mine-infested countries receiving external assistance were obliged to cooperate with the governments and organizations involved in mine-action services, mine-clearance was a "humanitarian requirement" and, therefore, should not be linked to any diplomatic preconditions or commitments. (Takht-Ravanchi 1996: 2; A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24 and A/53/PV.60, 1998: 25)

Still, in spite of its negative experiences with APM, Iran was not willing to commit itself to international mine-control instruments, even if it regularly lent its support for "genuine" international efforts to ban APM – a code-word for the Islamic Republic's position that international mine-control measures should focus on "indiscriminate" or "illegitimate" use of landmines (A/C.1/51/PV.21, 1996: 2 and A/52/PV.75, 1997: 24). According to the Iranians, the APM question had two dimensions, a humanitarian and a military one. Therefore, international mine-control activities had to take notice of the fact that "a large number of countries consider the military aspects of landmines as indispensable" (CD/PV.753, 1997: 21).[166] Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic strongly underscored, reserved itself the right to use landmines to safeguard its national security until a "universally acceptable" agreement to ban APM or a viable alternative to replace APM as a means of defence would be in place (A/C.1/52/PV.20, 1997: 4).[167]

Resultantly, Iran did not adhere even to those existing mine-control instruments that did not ban the military use of APM per se. The Islamic Republic did not sign the so-called Inhumane Weapons Convention of 1981 which, in its Protocol II, sets limits to the use of mines, booby-traps, and "other devices."[168] Neither did Iran become a party to the Amended Protocol II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention,[169] even though in

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[166] The military attractiveness of APM is based on a number of factors. Landmines are cheap to procure, easy to deploy, and their use for defensive purposes reduces the number of casualties. APM are also an effective tool of psychological warfare, for they create feelings of helplessness and panic among combatants and civilians. Moreover, APM need no maintenance or logistical support once they have been laid. For a discussion of these and other military benefits of APM, see Smith (1996: 278–279) and Copper (2000: 1–2).

[167] For Iranian statements calling for intensified international efforts to find a military alternative to landmines, see Adeli (1997: 3) and A/52/PV.75 (1997: 25).

[168] For the content of Protocol II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention, which seeks to reduce civilian casualties caused by APM in the course and after armed conflicts, see Goldblat (1999: 10–11).

[169] The Amended Protocol II was adopted in May 1996 by the review conference of the Inhumane Weapons Convention. The amended protocol aimed to further reduce civilian casualties and the loss of land for civilian purposes caused by APM. For an assessment of the Amended Protocol II, see ibid. (12–14).

November 1998, at the UN, Iran informed that it had "expedited the process of acceding" to that document (A/C.1/53/PV.23, 1998: 20).[170]

As far as the Islamic Republic's attitude towards the Ottawa Convention or the MBT was concerned, Iranian representatives maintained that, in its present form, the treaty did not satisfactorily balance the humanitarian and the military aspects of the landmine question.[171] Therefore, Iran ruled out its participation in the MBT, at least for the time being, even though at the signing conference of the MBT in Ottawa in December 1997, the Islamic Republic's representative expressed his government's support for the efforts "by some states to ban APMs through adoption of a legally binding agreement amongst themselves" – a formulation denoting the Iranian stance that the MBT was an arrangement that did not bind those states that stayed outside the convention (Adeli 1997: 2).[172]

Iran's disinterest in the MBT had become evident already during the diplomatic process – the so-called Ottawa process – that ultimately produced the treaty. For example, the Islamic Republic had been absent from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution 51/45/S of December 1996 that had urged all states to work for an international agreement banning APM, it had not endorsed the Brussels Declaration of June 1997 in support of a mine-ban treaty, and it had abstained from voting on the 1997 General Assembly resolution 52/38A that had backed the adoption of the MBT. Subsequently, in 1998, Iran abstained from voting on the General Assembly resolution 53/77N which welcomed new signatories to the MBT and urged the full implementation of the convention. And a year later, the Islamic Republic was among the 20 governments that abstained on the vote on the General Assembly resolution 54/54B in

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[170] Interestingly, an Iranian statement made two weeks later implied that the Islamic Republic's accession to the Amended Protocol II was linked to developed countries' willingness to respond to Iranian requests for international mine-clearance assistance (A/53/PV.60, 1998: 25).

[171] As one Iranian arms control official put it in November 1997, one month before the signing conference of the MBT: "That [Ottawa] process was expected to result in the preparation of a comprehensive and balanced document to address both the security and humanitarian aspects of the [landmine] problem, and to make provisions for financial support and the transfer of relevant advanced technology to affected countries, enabling those states to overcome this serious problem. Regrettably, the final Oslo text does not meet these concerns in a clear and concrete manner" (A/C.1/52/PV.20, 1997: 15). For an analysis and the details of the MBT, see Georghiades (1998: 53–62).

[172] By December 2000, 139 countries had signed and 109 ratified the treaty. The wide international participation in the convention meant that the MBT would have significant effects on future development of customary international law on APM. This would make it much more difficult for countries like Iran to defend the argument that the provisions of the MBT only bind the treaty members.

support of the MBT.[173] (*Landmine Monitor Report 1999,* 1999: 883–884 and <http://www.icbl.org>)

The main reason for Iran's reluctance to join the MBT was the military utility of APM. The officials of the Islamic Republic argued that landmines were the only viable means for Iran to defend its long borders in one of the most conflict-ridden parts of the world (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000).[174] Moreover, the Iranians drew a close linkage between the issue of landmines and the drug trafficking taking place from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Iranian territory and maintained that, without landmines, the Islamic Republic would not be able to repel drug trafficking operations on its borders.[175] Also, the Iranians discretely let it be known that foreign assistance to their country in finding substitutive defence options particularly along the Iranian-Afghan border would make it easier for their goverment to consider accession to international mine-control arrangements.[176]

Apart from security motives, there were also other factors, pertaining primarily to commercial and foreign policy considerations, that explained Iran's reluctance to join international mine-control instruments. As a producer and exporter of APM, the Islamic Republic had little interest in taking part in diplomatic arrangements that would impede the activities of its arms industry.[177] Even though Iran announced its intention to halt the production of APM (Steinberg 2000), declared in December 1997 that it would not export landmines (Adeli 1997: 3), and informed, in November 1998, that it had imposed a moratorium on the export of APM (A/C.1/53/PV.23, 1998: 20), it was not clear whether the Iranians had actually committed themselves to such measures.

The fact that APM of Iranian origin were regularly detected in countries like Afghanistan and Sudan (*BBC Monitoring Central Asia,* 13 October 1998 and *Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000) raised suspicions about the sincerity of the Iranian

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[173] Iranian officials constantly pointed out that the CD was the proper – and, for the time being, the only thinkable – forum for international negotiations on a "balanced, comprehensive and universally acceptable" ban on APM (A/C.1/53/PV.23, 1998: 20 and A/53/PV.60, 1998: 25).

[174] There is no information available about the number of APM deployed by Iran on its borders (*Landmine Monitor Report 2000,* 2000).

[175] Iran's use of landmines to secure its eastern borders meant, as pointed out by Dokhanchi (2004), that there were two mine-related developments occurring in the country. In western Iran, the focus of the Islamic Republic's authorities was on demining, whereas in the eastern parts of the country the Iranians were occupied with mine-planting.

[176] Author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (B) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2000.

[177] The Islamic Republic started to produce large numbers of APM during the Iran-Iraq war. The war-time production added to the estimated 1.5–2.5 million APM imported to Iran between 1969–1978 from the

diplomatic declarations. Of course, the officials of the Islamic Republic could have always argued that the Iranian landmines detected abroad had been transferred prior to such declarations or that their government had never intended to put restrictions on non-commerical mine shipments. Indeed, there was plenty of evidence at the time of Iranian weapons transfers to political actors sympathetic to the Islamic Republic. Iran's use of weapons shipments as a foreign policy tool involved not only APM but other kinds of small arms as well.

3.9.2 Small arms control

International deliberations on the control of small arms have consisted of two separate tracks of diplomatic talks. In spite of the fact that APM are a category of small arms, the mine question has been dealt with independently and separated from what has become known as the debate on small arms and light weapons.[178] The international community's interest in the control of small arms has stemmed first and foremost from the concern over the enormous human suffering caused by the use of those weapons in internal conflicts in various parts of the world. Not only contributing to the intensity, duration, and destructiveness of internal conflicts, the proliferation, accumulation, and use of small arms poses a serious threat to post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction as well. The elevation of the small arms issue to the international arms control agenda has also been speeded up by the fact that small arms are the main instruments of violence for nationally and transnationally operating criminal and terrorist groups.[179]

United States by the Shah's government. (Wareham 1998: 4 and *Landmine Monitor Report 1999,* 1999: 885)

[178] There are no single definitions of the terms 'small arms' and 'light weapons.' However, those put forward by the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms have been widely used. According to the panel – an expert group composed of representatives from 16 countries which was given the task, in December 1995, by the UN General Assembly to try to find answers to three central small arms-related questions: first, what kinds of small arms were used in the conflicts dealt with by the UN?; secondly, what were the causes for the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms?; and finally, what could be done about the small arms problem? – small arms are weapons designed for personal use, whereas light weapons are those designed for use by several persons serving as a crew. Small arms include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine-guns, assault rifles, and light machine-guns. Heavy machine-guns, portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, and light mortars are examples of light weapons. (A/52/298, 1997: 11–12). For the purpose of the following discussion, 'small arms' is used as a general term referring both to small arms and light weapons, as well as to the ammunition used in such armaments.

[179] For more on the characteristics of the global small arms problem, see Pirseyedi (2000: 3–10). It is estimated that, globally, there are more than 500 million small arms in existence. Such weapons are

Iran's diplomatic approach to the question of small arms was reserved right from the start. Given that the Islamic Republic was a producer and an exporter of small arms and that it used small arms transfers as an instrument to promote its foreign policy objectives, Iran's diplomatic cautiousness was hardly surprising. The Islamic Republic produced a wide variety of small arms, both under license and indigenously. The Iranian-manufactured products included, first of all, different kinds of ammunition ranging from bullets for assault rifles and sub-machine-guns to medium-calibre projectiles for machine-guns and shells for light mortars. As for actual armaments, the weaponry produced in Iranian ordnance factories included handgrenades, assault rifles, sub-machine-guns, light and heavy machine-guns, light mortars, as well as anti-tank weapons. (Sayigh 1997: 184–185 and *The Military Balance 1998/99,* 1998: 306–309)

A significant number of these weapons were transferred abroad by the authorities of the Islamic Republic, either in the form of commercial transactions or politico-military assistance. Even though the Iranians often exaggerated the volume of their country's arms exports, Iranian-produced small arms were actively offered to potential buyers directly and at major international arms exhibitions (*IRNA,* 11 April 2000 and *AP,* 30 April 2000). As for the politically motivated small arms transfers, the Islamic Republic supported non-state actors in various conflicts theaters by providing arms and ammunition to them. Often, Iranian officials denied such arms shipments,[180] but at times, they did not hesitate to underscore the importance of armaments as a means to solve political conflict. This was the case, for example, in October 1993, when the Iranian foreign minister told UN that arms transfers to Bosnian Muslims would serve the cause of peace in the ongoing civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (A/48/PV.14, 1993: 21).

Accordingly, Iran supplied large amounts of small arms and ammunition to Bosnian Muslim fighters in the course of the civil war, mostly via Turkey and Croatia (Hunter 1997: 538–540). Apart from Bosnia, Iran shipped small arms to forces opposing the ruling Taliban movement in Afghanistan, in addition to which Iranian small arms ended up in the hands of at least the following non-state actors: Hizballah in Lebanon,

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produced in over 70 states on an industrial scale and in numerous countries as a craft industry. (A/54/258, 1999: 8)

[180] For a statement to this effect, see the pronouncement from 1992 by president Rafsanjani who denied the Islamic Republic's involvement in the conflict in Sudan (*Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran,* 1993: 783) and the statement by president Khatami from 1999 in which he said that, contrary to international claims, the Islamic Republic was not providing weaponry to Palestinian militants (Khatami 1999: 2).

Palestinian rejectionist groups, such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, sympathetic Kurdish groups, and Sudanese Muslim fighters (Pirseyedi 2000: 22–24; *The Middle East Military Balance 1999–2000,* 2000: 183–184 and *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999,* 2000).

Despite the Islamic Republic's cautious diplomatic approach to small arms control – also explained by Iranian authorities' reluctance to accept limitations on the weaponry that was essential to the maintenance of domestic stability in their country – Iran's representatives emphasized that their government had nothing against diplomatic deliberations on small arms contol per se. At the same time, however, the Iranians noted that such discussions should neither obscure the priorities of multilateral arms control diplomacy as explicated in the final document of SSOD I of 1978 nor weaken the financial and operational resources of the UN in the area of WMD arms control or "macro-disarmament." (A/C.1/50/PV.28, 1995: 9 and A/C.1/51/PV.13, 1996: 19)

Still, in the course of time, Iranian authorities came to recognize the importance of small arms control and the fact that the proliferation, accumulation, and misuse of such weapons posed a threat to the interests of the Islamic Republic as well.[181] Iran voted in favour of the key UN resolutions pertaining to small arms,[182] and had a representative both in the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and in the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms.[183]

Iran's diplomatic oscillation between the view that small arms production and transfers were legitimate rights of every state and the growing international consensus that something had to be done about the spread and misuse of small arms meant that, like many other governments, the Islamic Republic focused its small arms argumentation on the control of illicit small arms trade – an issue which did not endanger states' arms production and transfers.[184] According to Iranian officials, who

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[181] For general Iranian analyses of the nature and the implications of the global small arms problem, see A/CN.10/PV.227 (1999: 4) and Nejad-Hosseinian (2000: 1).

[182] For Iran's voting behaviour in this regard, see Serafini (2000: xii, 3–6).

[183] The group of governmental experts, appointed by the UN secretary-general in April 1998, was given the task to map out the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made by the UN small arms panel in 1997. For the UN expert group's final report of August 1999, see A/54/258 (1999: 2–25).

[184] Illicit trade in small arms refers to small arms trade that is contrary to the national laws of the country of origin or the recipient state, and/or international law. There are differing views among states on whether small arms transfers by foreign governments to non-state actors should be automatically defined as illicit. Given the Islamic Republic's own track record in this regard, it was evident that Iran belonged to the states giving a negative answer to the question. The Islamic Republic's use of weapons transfers as a foreign policy instrument also largely explained why Iranian authorities showed no interest in the planned UN Firearms Protocol. The purpose of the protocol – which was adopted in May 2001 by UN

defined illicit small arms trade as a major threat to national and regional security and pointed out that the phenomenon was inseparably linked with the problems of terrorism and drug trafficking, the international community should seriously address the question (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 13).

Ironically, Iranian officials used the violence in Afghanistan as a prime example of the disastrous consequences of the circulation and accumulation of illicit small arms. The Iranians argued that illicit small arms transfers to Afghanistan had fuelled the Afghan civil war and increased ethnic, religious, and criminal violence in that country (A/52/PV.74, 1997: 3 and A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 13).[185] Also, the authorities of the Islamic Republic pointed out that large numbers of the illicit weaponry shipped to Afghanistan had been retransferred out of the country to other regional states, including Iran itself (A/53/PV.8, 1998: 6 and A/53/PV.84, 1998: 14). Moreover, Iranian officials stressed that, in recent years, the Islamic Republic had practically been waging a war on its eastern borders against drug traffickers equipped with various types of small arms – including surface-to-air missiles – and even heavy weaponry (Kharrazi 1998b: 2 and A/54/PV.78, 1999: 20).

Problems on Iran's eastern borders were not the Iranian leadership's only worry in this respect. Even though in many ways weak and by and large non-influential, there were militant opposition groups inside Iran that had chosen the path of armed conflict as a means to oppose the Islamic Republic.[186] The attacks by such groups against Iran's Islamic regime had almost exclusively been conducted with various kinds of small arms.[187] Therefore, it was clear that the officials of the Islamic Republic had also these

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General Assembly resolution 55/255 (see A/RES/55/255, 2001) as the third supplementary protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime – was to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. Article 3 of the protocol defined the term 'illicit trafficking' as "the import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery, movement or transfer of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition from or across the territory of one State Party to that of another State Party if any one of the States Parties concerned does not authorize it in accordance with the terms of this Protocol or if the firearms are not marked in accordance with article 8 of this Protocol."

[185] In the Iranian analysis, the lack of "responsible central authority in Afghanistan" had encouraged the people of Afghanistan to ensure their own security by resorting to small arms, which, in turn, had fed into additional accumulation of those weapons and increased violence (Nejad-Hosseinian 2000: 2).

[186] The main militant Iranian opposition groups consisted of the Islamic-Marxist Mujahidin-e Khalq, the Kurdish Democratic Party-Iran – both based in Iraq – and the armed Sunni groups operating inside Iran. For the characteristics and the operations of these groups, see Buchta (2000: 102–120).

[187] For example, the Mujahidin-e Khalq, considered a terrorist organization by Iranian authorities, had become famous for its attacks with light mortars, in addition to which the fighters of the Mujahidin were equipped with other kinds of small arms, such as handgrenades, pistols, and assault rifles. The Iranian media regularly reported on the arrests of the members of the Mujahidin and on the weaponry in their possession when caught.

groups in mind when making calls for international cooperation in the control of illicit small arms trade.

According to Iranian authorities, the Islamic Republic was prepared to support "any initiative by the United Nations and individual countries" to deal with the issue of illicit small arms trade (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 13). The Iranians welcomed the decision taken by the UN to convene an international conference on illicit trade in small arms in New York in July 2001 and emphasized that the world organization had the main responsibility for the elaboration of practical measures to tackle the problem. In the Iranian view, the recommendations listed in the reports prepared by the UN small arms panel and the UN expert group provided valuable guidelines for concrete measures in this respect.[188] The registration and the marking of small arms from the time of their manufacture were mentioned by the Iranians as examples of steps that would make it easier for the international community to track down and stop the movements of illicit small arms. Iranian representatives also argued that the states of the developed world should more forcefully regulate the "excessive production of small arms" by their arms industries. (A/54/260, 1999: 12–13 and Nejad-Hosseinian 2000: 2)

Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the efforts made at the global level to tackle the small arms problem should be accompanied by corresponding measures at the regional level. In Iran's opinion, regional cooperation in small arms control was instrumental because such cooperation would produce solutions based on specific knowledge of the regional circumstances (A/54/260, 1999: 13). By implying that Iran possessed such knowledge and by underscoring the linkage between the proliferation, accumulation, and misuse of small arms and the problem of drug trafficking, the officials of the Islamic Republic tried to persuade the international community to help Iran to fight the organized criminal groups involved in contraband trafficking into and out of Iran. Interestingly, Iranian officials made calls not only for political, material, and financial support, but for foreign military equipment assistance as well. (A/54/PV.78, 1999: 20 and *Campaign Against Drug Trafficking,* 2000: 11)

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[188] For the recommendations referred to by the Iranians, see A/54/258 (1999: 14–24).

4 ISLAMIC IRAN AND CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS DISARMAMENT[1]

4.1 Chemical Disarmament

Prior to the start of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq in September 1980, the officials of the Islamic Republic seemed to consider chemical disarmament just another standard subject on the international arms control agenda. Even though they did argue that chemical disarmament was the most important arms control issue after nuclear disarmament and made repeated calls for immediate international action in the area of chemical arms control (CD/PV.45, 1979: 13), their diplomatic pronouncements were routine contributions to a general inter-state debate rather than expressions of urgent national needs.

Thus, following the diplomatic guidelines set by the regime of the ousted Shah, the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained that the international community should tackle the issue of chemical weapons before those WMD would become regular instruments in states' military arsenals. To hinder the realization of such a discouraging scenario, the Iranians maintained, the international community should subject existing stocks of chemical weapons to limitation measures and to make sure that no new country would be able to acquire chemical armaments. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, the control of chemical weapons was a concern of both the developed and the developing world. While the Iranians underlined the importance of superpower deliberations on the subject and gave their support to bilateral limitation talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, they nonetheless emphasized that the main goal in chemical arms control was to conclude the multilateral diplomatic process that had gained momentum in the early 1970s and to prepare an international disarmament

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[1] Chemical armaments refer to weapons that "deliberately employ the toxic properties of chemical substances to cause death or harm" and to the munitions and devices used to deliver them to their target (Tulliu and Schmalberger 2001: 57, 59). Biological weapons, in turn, consist of biological warfare agents and the mechanism of their delivery. Biological warfare agents are "living organisms, whatever their nature, or infective material derived from them, that are intended to cause disease or death in man, animals, or plants and whose effectiveness depends on their ability to multiply in the person, animal, or plant attacked." Bacteria, viruses, rickettsia, fungi, and toxins constitute the main classes of biological warfare agents. They can be weaponized for delivery by various means, such as bombs and missiles. (Mäkelä 2002: 127; Flowerree 1993: 999 and Pearson 1993: 109–110)

convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons.[2] (Ibid. and CD/PV.61, 1980: 11)

After the commencement of the Iran-Iraq war, however, the context of Iran's chemical arms control operations underwent a dramatic change. Confronted with Iraq's use of chemical weapons, the Iranian operations transformed from deliberations on potential security problems into responses to concrete threats to Iran's national security. Since the Iranians were not able to militarily deter Iraq from resorting to chemical warfare, the only option left for them to influence Iraq's behaviour was to call on the international community to demand the Iraqis to stop their breaches of international law.

4.1.1 Iran's war-time chemical arms control operations

4.1.1.1 The emergence of the Iraqi chemical threat, 1980–1983

According to the official Iranian view, presented during and after the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq started its chemical attacks against Iranian troops in January 1981 (CD/PV.130, 1981: 31; A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 8 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 3).[3] Thus, the claims made by Iranian representatives in 1980 that Iraq had resorted to the use of chemical weapons against the Iranian military during the initial stages of the war (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 513 and Robinson 1985: 207) and that Saddam Hussein was planning to use WMD against Iranian civilians as well (A/C.1/35/PV.20, 1980: 44–45) appear to have implied two things. In the first place, they indicate that the officials of the Islamic Republic quickly adopted the issue of chemical weapons as a part of their war propaganda. Secondly, and more importantly, the Iranian claims suggest that, at the time of the commencement of the Iran-Iraq war, the authorities of the Islamic Republic were at least to some extent informed about Iraq's chemical capabilities and, therefore, worried about the possibility that Iraq would start to systematically use chemical agents against their country. The fact that Iraq had established its Chemical Warfare Corps in 1964 (Flowerree 1993: 1000) and tried to boost its chemical weapons program during

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[2] The call for the creation of an international chemical disarmament treaty had been made by Iran already under the Shah (A/S-10/PV.18, 1978: 339 and CD/PV.6, 1979: 30).

[3] The officials of the Islamic Republic did not provide an exact start-off date for Iraq's chemical warfare, but the reference to January 1981 probably points to the Iranian accusation, recorded by Robinson (1985: 207), that Iraqi aircraft dropped chemical bombs on the Ahwaz region on 9 January 1981.

the 1970s (Karsh 1993: 32–33 and Russell 2005b: 193) gave plenty of grounds for the Iranian worries.[4]

It is generally believed that by the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq's chemical arsenal was modest at best (Karsh 1993: 33).[5] Accordingly, even if Iran's claims about Iraq's chemical weapons use against Iranian troop concentrations in 1981 were true, it was not until 1983 that Iraq used other chemical agents than non-lethal tear gas on the battlefield (Flowerree 1993: 1002).[6] This probably explains why Iranian arms control officials' pre-1983 statements only rarely alluded to Iraqi chemical weapons.[7] Instead, Iranian representatives focused on criticizing the general state of international chemical arms control. In June 1982, for example, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic noted that, "in the case of the total and effective prohibition of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and of their eradication," no progress had been made. To support his assessment that the situation would remain the same in the coming years, the Iranian foreign minister referred to past use of chemical substances by the United States in the Vietnam War and to on-going U.S. chemical armament efforts under the administration of president Ronald Reagan. In spite of their pessimistic view of the state of international chemical arms control, however, the Iranians voted in favour of UN General Assembly resolutions 36/96A and 36/96B of 1981 as well as 37/98A and 37/98C of 1982 which all dealt with chemical disarmament.[8] (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 33;

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[4] It should be noted that, at the time, Iran's armed forces were poorly prepared to shield themselves from chemical attacks. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, such unpreparedness was a direct result of Iran's military planning under the Shah which had based on the U.S.–NATO premise that viewed the Iranian military merely as a 24-hour buffer against an attack carried out by the Soviet Union (author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002).

[5] Initially, Iraq's chemical weapons program had begun as a response and counterweight to Israel's WMD efforts. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s, Iraq had received outside assistance for its program from Egypt – whose military had used chemical weapons against royalist tribesmen in Yemen in the early 1960s –, European equipment suppliers, and first and foremost from the Soviet Union. The Soviet help had consisted not only of transfers of essential chemical materials and precursors as well as of the sale mustard gas stockpiles, but also of scientific and technological expertise and of advice on military doctrine. (Hiltermann 2007: 12, 26–27 and Russell 2005b: 192–194)

[6] Tear gas belongs to so-called control agents which "produce temporary irritating or disabling effects when in contact with the eyes or inhaled" (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 515).

[7] For example, Mir Husain Musavi, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic, made no mention of Iraq's chemical weapons in his address to the UN General Assembly in October 1981. Neither did his successor Ali Akbar Vilayati make any references to Iraq's chemical weapons in his statement to the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament in June 1982 or in his address to the General Assembly in October 1982.

[8] The resolutions in question mainly underlined the necessity of the earliest elaboration and conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition of the development, production, and stockpiling of all chemical weapons (see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1981,* 1985: 72–73 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1982,* 1986: 101–102).

Yearbook of the United Nations 1981, 1985: 72–73 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1982*, 1986: 96, 101–102).

Although Iran claimed that Iraq's first use of mustard gas[9] occurred in October 1982 (Karsh 1993: 35), the first major Iraqi employment of chemical agents against Iranians took place in July–August 1983 during the Islamic Republic's military offensive – code-named Wal-Fajr II – in the northern Kurdish area near the Iraqi town of Haj Umran (Ali 2001: 47–48).[10] Diplomatically, Iran responded to Iraq's chemical weapons use during Wal-Fajr II by bringing the matter to the UN secretary-general's attention in a letter dated on 18 August 1983 (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1983,* 1987: 238). Still, it was not until late October 1983 that Iran was forced to step up its diplomatic efforts against Iraq's chemical warfare.[11] On 28 October, the officials of the Islamic Republic informed the secretary-general about Iraq's use of chemical weapons and asked him to verify their claim (Mostaghimi and Taromsari 1997: 65). In a letter of 3 November 1983 to the UN Security Council – sent through the secretary-general – Iran claimed that, in the preceding weeks, Iraq had on numerous occasions resorted to chemical warfare, and repeated its request for a representative of the secretary-general to examine the medical and military evidence of those attacks (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1983,* 1987: 62, 241).

Iran's appeals to the UN continued throughout November 1983. On 9 November, the Islamic Republic reported to the world organization that Iraq had targeted civilian Iranian population with chemical armaments. According to Iranian authorities, shrapnel from two Iraqi artillery rounds fired into the Piranshahr area on 25 October and the injuries caused by those munitions had testified to Iraq's deployment of chemical agents. The Iranians made it diplomatically known that they had provided samples

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[9] Mustard gas is one of so-called blister agents, that is, "agents that destroy skin and tissue, cause blindness upon contact with the eyes, and which can result in fatal respiratory damage." Blister agents can be absorbed through skin contact or inhalation. Their military utility is based on their ability to inflict rapid mass casualties over a wide area, also in the case that the target group is equipped with respirators. (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 515 and Robinson 2002: 124)

[10] The Iraqi leadership's initial decision to resort to chemical warfare in the Iran–Iraq war stemmed from the fact that the human-wave attacks carried out by Iranian troops, mostly by untrained and essentially unarmed irregulars, posed a major challenge to Iraq's military defences. Chemical weapons were seen by the Iraqis as an effective means to block Iran's human-wave attacks – which based on the idea that the Islamic Republic's superior manpower pool would ultimately drain off Iraq's ammunition supplies – as well as to install a sense of fear in Iranian soldiers' minds. As far as Iraq's use of chemical weapons during Wal-Fajr II was concerned, the Haj Umran episode was the first documented instance since World War I in which chemical armaments were employed in battle between two large conventional forces. (Hiltermann 2007: xv, 25–26 and Russell 2005b: 194–196)

[11] Note, for example, that the Iranian foreign minister's address to the UN General Assembly in September 1983 had not yet included any remarks about Iraqi use of WMD.

validating the Iraqi attack of 25 October to the Islamic Republic's UN mission, and that this purported evidence would be available for inspection by any expert assigned by the secretary-general. Iran repeated its accusation of Iraq's WMD use against Iranian civilians and troops to the UN on 16 November – specific references were made to a bomb dropped on a village near the town of Banih on 21 October and to three rounds of chemical shells fired at "the front line" on 30 October – and expressed the hope that the secretary-general would dispatch a team of experts to the sites in question in order to verify Iran's claims before the traces of the chemicals employed would disappear. According to Iran, Iraq's chemical attacks of October 1983 had included the use of mustard gas and compounds containing arsenic. (Ibid.)

Not unexpectedly, Iraq categorically rejected all Iranian accusations of chemical warfare. Iraqi authorities argued that Iran's claims were attempts to manipulate the UN for propaganda purposes and accused the Islamic Republic of trying to use the issue of chemical weapons as a means to divert international attention from Iran's refusal to halt its "war of aggression" and to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. Resultantly, the Iraqi leadership was strongly against the Iranian proposals for the dispatch of UN secretary-general's representatives to investigate Iraqi use of toxic weapons. (Ibid.)

From the Iranian perspective, Iraq's obstructive diplomacy struck as highly effective. The Islamic Republic's frustration with what it regarded as the international community's total disregard for Iraq's shameless breaches of international law became evident, for example, in December 1983, when Iranian officials accused the UN Security Council of pro-Iraqi attitudes. In Iran's opinion, the Security Council had hampered the acquisition of evidence of Iraq's chemical warfare by doing nothing while much of the existing evidence was fading away due to lapse of time. Because of their inaction, Iranian authorities argued, the members of the Security Council bore partial responsibility for Iraq's use of WMD.[12] More directly, the Iranians accused the Soviet Union and France, two of the five permanent members of the council, of supplying Iraq with chemical armaments. (Ibid. and Robinson 1984: 331)

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[12] Iranian authorities had criticized the Security Council of pro-Iraqi sympathies right from the outset of the Iran–Iraq war. The reason was that, contrary to Iranian expectations, the council had not designated Iraq as the aggressor and demanded the Iraqi government to withdraw its forces from Iranian territory. Instead, in a presidential statement of 23 September 1980 and in resolution 479 of 28 September 1980, the

4.1.1.2 The Islamic Republic's diplomatic offensive, 1984–1986

Iranian diplomacy in 1984

The statements made by Iran in late 1983 laid the foundation for the Islamic Republic's war-time diplomacy in the area of chemical arms control. As Iraq, encouraged by international tolerance of its conduct, began, from 1984 onwards, to escalate its chemical warfare by integrating chemical operations with regular military planning and by probing new technologies (Ali 2001: 48–49 and Hiltermann 2007: 149), Iranian authorities were forced to correspondingly intensify their diplomatic efforts to mobilize world opinion against Iraq's use of toxic weapons.[13] Thorough recording of Iraq's chemical attacks and regular releases of information about them were among the methods Iranian officials resorted to.

In 1984, Iran's first announcement to the UN of Iraqi use of chemical armaments was made on 29 February, when the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed that, on 26 and 27 February, Iraq had resorted to the use of chemical bombs in the Hur al-Huwaiza area in the southern part of the war front. On 29 February, the Iranians also maintained that Iraq's largest chemical bombardment to date had taken place on 28 February during Iran's military offensive – code-named Khaibar – in the Hur al-Huwaiza area. Over 700 Iranian combatants were reported to have been injured during that Iraqi bombardment. In March 1984, Iranian authorities informed the international community of Iraqi chemical attacks in the same operational theater. Iraq was told to have used chemical weapons on a massive scale in the Hur al-Huwaiza area on 9 March and in the Jufair region on 17 March. What made Iraq's chemical attacks during operation Khaibar exceptional was that they constituted the first recorded battlefield use of nerve gas in history. The nerve agent employed by the Iraqis was tabun.[14] (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1984,* 1988: 231; CD/PV.254, 1984: 31 and Hiltermann 2007: 34)

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council had only called on both parties to desist from all armed activity and to seek a peaceful solution to their dispute.

[13] As pointed out by one representative of the Islamic Republic, the year 1984 marked the beginning of systematic use of chemical armaments by Iraq and thereby also the starting point for intense Iranian diplomatic efforts against such weapons (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [C] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

[14] Tabun and other nerve agents – which can be absorbed through inhalation or skin contact – quickly disrupt the nervous system by binding to enzymes critical to nerve functions, causing convulsions and/or paralysis, and often resulting in death. The military utility of nerve agents is based on their ability to inflict rapid mass casualties over a wide area, also in cases where the target group is equipped with respirators. Iraq's tactical calculations for employing tabun based on the fact that tabun, unlike mustard

Given that from April 1984 onwards the ground battles between Iran and Iraq turned into a war of attrition – and that Iraq's troops consequently did not need to resort to gas warfare in order to halt Iran's infantry offensives –, the number of Iranian references to Iraqi chemical attacks decreased during the rest of the year. Nonetheless, this did not mean that the officials of the Islamic Republic remained silent in the matter of chemical weapons. At the end of April 1984, for example, they charged Iraq of chemical warfare that month and made similar accusations later in August by claiming that the Iraqi military had chemically targeted the Iranian city of Abadan on 16 August. According to Iranian officials, between 13 March – when a group of specialists appointed by the UN secretary-general went to Iran to investigate Iranian allegations of Iraqi use of chemical armaments[15] – and 30 August 1984, Iraq had used chemical agents against Iranian troops and civilians at least on 24 occasions. The agents used in those attacks were reported to have included mustard gas and tabun.[16]

The officials of the Islamic Republic explained that the main motive for their active reporting on Iraq's use of chemical armaments was religious.[17] It was their Islamic duty to publicize the Iraqi crimes, to expose the dire consequences of those violations, and to call for international measures stopping Iraq's attacks. To justify their strong demands for international action against the regime of Saddam Hussein, Iranian representatives referred, in the first place, to the humanitarian suffering caused by Iraq's chemical assaults. The medical repercussions of the Iraqi attacks were regularly brought up by the Iranians who meticulously listed and presented information about the number of Iranian

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gas, the standard agent used by the Iraqis, dissipates quickly and makes it possible for soldiers to move swiftly into a contaminated area. Whereas it is believed that the Iraqis had reached self-sufficiency in the production of mustard gas – and the capability to weaponize that agent – by the time of the commencement of the Iran–Iraq war, Iraq's nerve agent efforts reportedly took a major leap forward in the course of 1982 with the help of private Western suppliers. (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 515; Robinson 2002: 124 and Hiltermann 2007: 26–27, 35)

[15] The UN group of specialists made a fact-finding visit to Iran from 13 to 19 March 1984. The Islamic Republic had lodged a formal request for such a visit on 8 March, and on the same day, alluding to the humanitarian principles embodied in the UN Charter and to the moral responsibilities vested in his office, the secretary-general had announced his decision to dispatch an investigatory mission to Iran. The UN experts – who did not visit Iraq because of the Iraqi government's refusal to issue a permission – concluded in their report to the Security Council that chemical weapons in the form of aerial bombs had been used in the areas inspected by them in Iran. According to the report, the chemical agents employed had consisted of mustard gas and tabun. However, the UN investigators did not take a stand on who had carried out the chemical attacks in question. (Robinson 1985: 182; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1984*, 1988: 232 and Hiltermann 2007: 59–60). After the publication of the expert group's report, Iranian officials began to allude to it as a proof of the validity of their claims regarding Iraqi chemical weapons use (CD/PV.254, 1984: 32–33 and CD/PV.262, 1984: 8).

[16] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.262 (1984: 8, 65); CD/PV.283 (1984: 41); CD/PV.286 (1984: 27) and CD/PV.254 (1984: 30, 32).

[17] Note, for example, the speech by foreign minister Vilayati at the CD in February 1984 (CD/PV.242, 1984: 9).

chemical-related deaths in Iranian and foreign hospitals[18] as well as about the various kinds of physical and psychological symptoms caused by the chemical agents employed by Iraq.[19] Iranian officials also pointed out that Iraq's chemical warfare had seriously damaged the natural environment. (CD/PV. 242, 1984: 10–11 and CD/PV.254, 1984: 30–31)

The second main point made by the officials of the Islamic Republic to substantiate their calls for international measures against Iraq was that the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi military gravely threatened the credibility of international law and especially that of the so-called Geneva Protocol of 1925.[20] At the time of the Iran–Iraq war, the Geneva Protocol – a legal instrument that prohibits the use of chemical weapons in war – was the only major international treaty focusing on such armaments.[21] The Iranians maintained that Iraq's chemical weapons use had dramatically heightened the risk that states would start to disregard the protocol's obligations and abandon the conceptual distinction between chemical and conventional armaments. Such a development, Iranian officials extended their argument, could in turn increase the possibility that even nuclear weapons would be used in future conflicts. All in all, then, by consenting or by paying no heed to Iraq's use of chemical weapons, Iranian authorities summarized, governments would not only compromise the humane principles and ideals of the mankind, evade their responsibility for the fate of the Iranian people, and stand out against the world public opinion that abhorred chemical armaments, but would also be held accountable for the increased threat of WMD to international and regional security.[22]

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[18] During the Iran–Iraq war, Iranian victims of Iraq's chemical assaults were treated at least in the following foreign countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and West Germany.

[19] To support their diplomatic efforts, Iranian authorities also invited foreign reporters and physicians to visit the Islamic Republic and to meet Iranian patients described as chemical weapons casualties. In addition, they organized medical gatherings dealing with chemical weapons. Already in November 1983, the Iranians had held an international medical conference in Tehran during which they had presented evidence of Iraq's chemical warfare and presented living victims of Iraqi chemical attacks. (CD/PV.262, 1984: 8; Robinson 1985: 213, 215 and O'Ballance 1988: 149)

[20] The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare entered into force in 1928.

[21] From a strictly legal point of view, the Geneva Protocol – to which Iran became a party in 1929 and Iraq two years later in 1931 – is part of international humanitarian law and not an arms control instrument. The protocol does not ban the possession or the development of chemical armaments, and neither does it prohibit the use of those weapons in non-war situations. It should be noted that in addition to declaring Iraq's chemical warfare as a breach against the Geneva Protocol, Iranian officials pointed to legal interpretations according to which the use of chemical weapons was against international customary law as well (CD/PV.254, 1984: 30).

[22] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.254 (1984: 32–33); CD/PV.286 (1984: 26–27); A/C.1/39/PV.36 (1984: 62–65) and A/C.1/39/PV.40 (1984: 71).

The fact that Iran's intense diplomacy did not produce the kind of international response the Islamic Republic had hoped for caused major irritation among the Iranian leadership. Maintaining that their country was facing an international "conspiracy of silence," the leaders of the Islamic Republic, whose radical outlook on domestic and international affairs generated little sympathy or credibility internationally, declared it astonishing that most governments were not interested in punishing or even criticizing Iraq for its use of WMD.[23] The UN Security Council was the central target of the Islamic Republic's criticism. According to Iranian officials, the inaction and indifference of the "so-called Security Council" – claimed by the Iranians to be only interested in securing the objectives of the major powers – encouraged Iraq to continue its chemical warfare. That the Security Council had not responded to the March 1984 UN specialist group report by producing a resolution that would have condemned, and included measures to halt, Iraq's chemical attacks was told by the Iranians to illustrate, for its part, that the Security Council had silently approved Iraq's "barbarous crimes" which, in the Iranian view, had originally been initiated because the Iraqi leadership had become frustrated with the ineffectivity of the sophisticated conventional weaponry delivered to the regime of Saddam Hussein by the major powers.[24] (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 296–297; A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 61 and CD/PV. 262, 1984: 7–9)

Iranian representatives tried to strengthen the legitimacy of their diplomatic demands by making constant allusions to the Islamic Republic's own declared position not to resort to chemical warfare due to religious and humanitarian reasons. Even though the Geneva Protocol of 1925 was interpreted by the Iranians to allow a state party to retaliate in kind against another contracting party if subjected to a chemical attack, the Islamic Republic was told not to be willing to pursue the option sanctioned by

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[23] For statements reflecting Iranian authorities' frustration, see CD/PV.254 (1984: 31–33) and CD/PV.262 (1984: 9–10).

[24] After receiving the UN investigators' March 1984 report, the Security Council had agreed on a weak presidential statement which, among others, condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war – thereby not identifying Iraq as the culprit – and, to the dismay of Iranian authorities, called on both the Islamic Republic and Iraq to scrupulously adhere to the obligations of the Geneva Protocol. Prior to the Security Council's presidential statement, Iraqi officials had seen a lot of diplomatic trouble to make sure that the council would not name their country as the perpetrator and that the council would link the chemical weapons matter to the issue of ending the war. The United States – which, on 5 March 1984, had publicly acknowledged and condemned Iraq's use of chemical weapons but, at the same time, had started to take sides with Iraq in the war – had played a central role in the formulation of a Security Council response that corresponded to Iraq's wishes. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1984*, 1988: 232 and Hiltermann 2007: 39–40, 60–61)

international law.[25] Iranian officials pointed out that their leaders had seriously considered the issue of chemical retaliation but had decided to firmly forgo such course of action. Nevertheless, deliberately or not, Iranian authorities gave ambiguous and even conflicting information about the Islamic Republic's own chemical weapons capability. While some Iranian officials said that Iran had not so far produced any chemical armaments and that the production of WMD had been forbidden by the religious authorities of the Islamic Republic, some Iranian representatives implied that the Islamic Republic actually possessed a chemical weapons capability which it nonetheless was not prepared to employ.[26] (CD/PV.262, 1984: 9; A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 66; A/C.1/39/PV.40, 1984: 72–75 and Eisenstadt 1998b: 9)

Irrespective of their contradictory statements, Iranian officials made it clearly known that the Islamic Republic's magnanimous position on the use of chemical weapons was not unchanging. On the contrary, should the international community continue to ignore Iraq's chemical attacks, Iran would have no other choice than to reluctantly retaliate in kind.[27] Interestingly, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic warnings not only shifted the responsibility for potential Iranian use of chemical weapons to the international community, but also suggested that Islamic law, to which the Iranians had referred to as prohibiting the use of chemical armaments, did not forbid chemical warfare under all circumstances. If a certain, unspecified threshold was crossed, Islamic law would allow

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[25] The Iranian legal reading of the Geneva Protocol based on the fact that due to the large number of reservations made to the instrument by states parties that had retained the right to retaliate with chemical weapons against any chemical attack upon themselves as well as against non-members of the protocol, the Geneva Protocol was widely viewed as an arrangement prohibiting only the first-use of chemical armaments. It should be mentioned that Iran had never made reservations to the protocol, whereas Iraq had joined the protocol "on condition that the Iraq government shall be bound by the provisions of the Protocol only towards those states which have both signed and ratified it or have acceded thereto, and that it shall not be bound by the Protocol towards any state at enmity with Iraq whose armed forces, or the forces of whose allies, do not respect the provisions of the Protocol." After having signed the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, many states withdrew their reservations to the Geneva Protocol. For the content of the reservations made to the protocol by various governments, see <http://projects.sipri.se/cbw/docs/cbw-hist-geneva-res.html>.

[26] On 29 June 1984, the UN secretary-general addressed a message to the presidents of Iran and Iraq in which he called on both governments to declare to him within three days that each undertook a solemn commitment not to use chemical weapons. In his response of 2 July, the president of the Islamic Republic welcomed the secretary-general's message and stated that Iran had never retaliated in kind against Iraq's chemical assaults and that it was fully committed to non-use of chemical armaments. Later, Iranian officials explained that even though the secretary-general's call had been unfair because it had juxtaposed Iran with "criminal Iraq," the Islamic Republic did not want to make a noise of "this injustice" due to its willingness to support the secretary-general's arms control efforts. As far as Iraq was concerned, it never responded to the secretary-general's request of June 1984. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1984*, 1988: 237; A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 66 and Robinson 1985: 183)

[27] As emphasized by Iran's permanent representative to the UN: "We hate such a solution and we do not wish to have it imposed on us" (A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 66).

Iran to resort to chemical weapons.[28] (A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 66 and A/C.1/39/PV.40, 1984: 17)

The officials of the Islamic Republic also strongly denounced the views of the foreign governments that linked the curtailment of Iraq's chemical weapons use with the termination of the Iran–Iraq war. Iran maintained that chemical warfare did not constitute just another dimension of the war but was an independent matter that needed immediate attention. The linkages made between chemical weapons use and war termination, the Iranians said, gave the impression that chemical warfare was permissible under certain conditions and that the issue of WMD use was not serious enough to be dealt with autonomously. Moreover, by agreeing to negotiate with Iraq, the Islamic Republic would be admitting that chemical weapons were in fact an effective policy instrument. The coupling of chemical weapons use with political issues, the Iranians continued, would set a dangerous precedent, for potential users of WMD would always find friends to diplomatically defend their unlawful actions. To curb the international criticism that Iran was not ready to sit down at the negotiating table with Iraq, the representatives of the Islamic Republic bluntly asked who would have been ready to negotiate with Hitler when his reign was coming to an end. (CD/PV.262, 1984: 11 and A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 62–65, 71)

Iran's dissatisfaction with the international response to Iraq's chemical warfare had a major effect on the way the Islamic Republic viewed multilateral diplomatic efforts in the realm of chemical arms control. In the Iranian analysis, Iraq's unhindered use of chemical armaments had shown that the world was in a situation where there were no effective restrictions on the sale and use of those WMD. The representatives of the Islamic Republic charged countries like France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union with supplying and promoting Iraq's chemical weapons program[29] and called for immediate international measures to stop the transfers of chemical

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[28] The statements made by Iranian officials did not elaborate on the content of Islamic law with regard to the use of chemical armaments. However, Ayatollah Khomeini reportedly dismissed the idea of chemical weapons use during the war by referring to the Islamic injuction prohibiting combatants from polluting the natural environment. The sources of Islamic jurisprudence also contain injunctions that prohibit the use of weapons that cause indiscriminate damage and obscure the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. (Ali 2001: 51; author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Aboul-Enein and Zuhur 2004: 22–23)

[29] Iran supported its charges by referring to international media and NGO reports (CD/PV.242, 1984: 9–10). The various sources of Iraq's war-time imports for its chemical weapons program, together with the fact that many Western governments – including those of the United States and Germany – authorized the sale to Saddam Hussein of numerous dual-use items with WMD applications, are documented, for example, in the *Washington Post* (30 December 2002), Adib-Moghaddam (2006: 31, 35) and Hiltermann (2007: 62, 222, 235).

technology and armaments to Iraq.[30] The so-called "first-degree agents of aggression" – that is, those who supplied WMD to Iraq and, therefore, bore the main responsibility for Iraq's use of chemical agents – were claimed by the Iranians to also be the ones who blocked any meaningful progress in international chemical arms control. (CD/PV.242, 1984: 7, 9; Ali 2001: 48 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1984,* 1988: 233, 237)

In the Iranian view, the Iran–Iraq war had shown that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 had no practical relevance. It was only a document to which arms control diplomats eloquently alluded to at international gatherings.[31] In a similar manner, Iranian officials criticized the international diplomatic efforts to produce a convention that would prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons. They maintained that the "long, boring and fruitless" deliberations on the Chemical Weapons Convention were a tool used by the major powers to fool the world public opinion and to prevent "tyrannized countries" from gaining their rights. In reality, the Iranians said, the major powers were heavily involved in producing chemical weapons in order to promote their "inhumane and colonial" policies. The major powers, the Iranians added, were interested in chemical arms control only if it benefited themselves. Thus, for example, Iranian officials pointed out that while diplomatic suggestions had been put forth for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe, nobody had shown corresponding interest in prohibiting chemical armaments in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East or the Far East. (CD/PV.242, 1984: 8, 11 and CD/PV.262, 1984: 9, 11)

Below the harsh rhetorical surface, however, the authorities of the Islamic Republic recognized that an international chemical disarmament treaty, however far ahead, would contribute to Iran's national security. In addition, the Iranians understood that in the wake of their experiences with Iraq's chemical attacks and with the international community's half-hearted response to the Iraqi breaches, the diplomatic discussions on the CWC would provide them a valuable forum to raise up issues that pertained to

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[30] Iran also demanded the UN secretary-general to conduct detailed investigations to determine which countries had contributed to Iraq's chemical weapons program. It should be noted that, at the end of March 1984, the United States had declared a ban on the export of precursor chemicals to both Iraq and Iran. In addition, the administration of president Reagan had approached a number of its foreign allies in Europe and elsewhere to call on them to take corresponding steps. In Iran's opinion, the export control efforts of the United States were a hypocritical propaganda move whose real aim was to conceal Washington's role in supplying chemicals to Iraq. (CD/PV.262, 1984: 9 and Hiltermann 2007: 53, 63)

[31] As put by one Iranian representative in October 1984: "If the authors of the 1925 Geneva Protocol [...] could possibly know that some 60 years later the result of their efforts would be ridiculed so openly and shamelessly by an unscrupulous, unrestrained régime such as that of the present-day Iraq, they would hardly think their Protocol worth the paper it was written on" (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 298).

chemical weapons use in the Iran–Iraq war. Consequently, Iranian arms control diplomats took active part in the CWC negotiations which began in 1984 within the ad hoc working group – later ad hoc committee – established for the purpose at the CD.[32]

According to Iran's CWC negotiators, chemical disarmament was the most pressing disarmament challenge faced by the international community. For that reason, the officials of the Islamic Republic said, their country would do everything in its capacity to ensure the early conclusion of an effective international convention. As for the content of the planned legal instrument, Iranian representatives stressed that the treaty should include mechanisms for the prevention of the use of chemical weapons and for the punishment of those resorting to chemical warfare. Iran called for the destruction of all existing chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities in the world and supported the idea that the destruction and conversion of existing chemical weapons arsenals would be verified by on-site observers.[33] (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 298; CD/PV.242, 1984: 11 and CD/PV.286, 1984: 28)

If a party or a non-party to the CWC decided to produce or employ chemical armaments, Iranian CWC negotiators argued, such a country should be collectively punished by the CWC member states. Otherwise, the Iranians stressed, the CWC would face the same fate of impotence as the Geneva Protocol, and the violators of the convention would get off the hook in the same way as Iraq did after the publication of the UN specialist group report of March 1984. Furthermore, the Iranian negotiators argued, a country that becomes a victim of chemical warfare should receive immediate help from other CWC states parties in order to combat the aggression through "defensive and protective measures."[34] In the Iranian view, a state targeted with chemical weapons should also be entitled, under the planned convention, to receive medical help from abroad. Moreover, Iranian representatives were of the opinion that the CWC should include a mechanism, a permanent fact-finding team, that would

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[32] For a historical overview of multilateral diplomatic efforts in the area of chemical arms control prior to 1984, see Robinson (1998: 17–32).

[33] Iranian negotiators noted that the verification mechanism of the CWC should be effective enough to cover not only the stages of the development and production of chemical weapons but the stockpiling, acquiring, transfer, and use of such armaments as well. Iranian authorities stressed that their experiences with Iraq enabled them to provide the drafters of the CWC with valuable advice and information as far as the development of the CWC's verification system – and the whole convention, for that matter – was concerned. "Let us learn the general from experiencing the specific" was the declared Iranian motto in this connection. (CD/PV.262, 1984: 10 and A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 62–65)

[34] As already noted above, when Iraq started the use of chemical weapons against Iran, the troops of the Islamic Republic had practically no defensive gear to protect themselves from the effects of chemical agents. It took several years before Iran was properly able to domestically produce protective equipment (Zanders 2001: 3).

automatically respond to a victim state's request for an inspection to verify the use of chemical armaments. (CD/PV.262, 1984: 9 and CD/PV.286, 1984: 28)

Iranian officials reminded their co-negotiators that in order to guarantee the success of the future CWC, they had to collectively rectify the damages done to international chemical disarmament by Iraq's actions. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic called on all governments to condemn the use of chemical weapons and to reaffirm their commitment to the Geneva Protocol. In addition, Iran stressed that chemical weapons use should be defined in the future CWC as a war crime for which the perpetrators would be internationally punished. The officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the diplomatic proposals of their country should be taken seriously, for the Iranian people, as the latest victims of chemical armaments, were able to see "the gloomy future in store for all mankind" if the use of those WMD continued. (A/39/PV.15, 1984: 299; A/C.1/39/PV.40, 1984: 71–75 and CD/PV.262, 1984: 10)

Iranian diplomacy in 1985 and 1986

On 11 March 1985, Iran's armed forces launched a major land offensive, code-named Operation Badr, across the Huwaiza marshes in the southern sector of the war front. In order to prevent the Iranians from achieving their tactical objective of seizing the Iraqi city of Basra and cutting it off from the rest of the country (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 201), on 13 March, the Iraqi military resorted to chemical warfare for the first time since August 1984 (CD/PV.299, 1985: 10). This incident, together with Iraq's subsequent chemical attacks during March and April 1985,[35] sparked a strong

[35] The Iranians claimed that, between 13 March and 9 April 1985, Iraq used chemical weapons on 33 different occasions. After those attacks – that is, after the heavy land battles between Iran and Iraq again transformed into sporadic clashes – Iraq used chemical armaments in the course of 1985 only seldom. According to official Iranian information, during the rest of 1985, Iraq used chemical weapons at least on 17 April, 7 and 8 May, and 2 November. In the course of 1985, Iran continued to meticulously report the medical implications of Iraq's chemical warfare. One of the reasons Iranian officials gave for their continuous references to the medical aspects of Iraq's chemical weapons use was that Iran's experiences as a victim of chemical warfare provided highly valuable information to the national delegations involved in multilateral negotiations on the CWC. Another reason given by the Iranians was that the Islamic Republic did not want to see the crimes committed by Iraq to be repeated in other parts of the world. In April 1985, the UN secretary-general dispatched a medical expert to visit Iranian patients allegedly suffering from the effects of chemical weapons and being treated in European hospitals. The core conclusion of the expert visit was that chemical weapons – mustard gas – had been used during March 1985 in the war between Iran and Iraq. Although the final report of the UN investigation, once again, refrained from naming the party guilty of chemical warfare, Iranian authorities referred to the 1985 specialist report as another piece of indisputable evidence of Iraq's violations of the Geneva Protocol. (CD/PV.308, 1985: 9, 11; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1985*, 1989: 247–248; CD/PV.348, 1986: 21 and Hiltermann 2007: 69)

diplomatic response from the Islamic Republic's officials who maintained that Iraq's resumption of chemical warfare marked a new stage in that country's use of WMD. According to the Iranians, the Iraqi military had employed not only tabun and mustard gas in its 1985 attacks, but also new chemical agents such as an agent composed of "Tabun and an asphyxiating agent" and an agent comprised of "Tabun, cyanide compounds as well as mustard gas" (CD/PV.308, 1985: 9 and CD/PV.309, 1985: 34).[36]

Given Iraq's continuing violations of international law, Iranian representatives reiterated their demands for immediate international action to stop Iraq's chemical warfare.[37] In the Iranian view, Iraq's actions were against all universal values of humanity and severely jeopardized the credibility of international law and such international bodies as the UN and the CD. The officials of the Islamic Republic continued to blame foreign governments for what they described as those governments' "catastrophic and conspiratorial indifference" to Iraqi use of WMD and maintained that such inaction was increasing pressure on the Iranian side to consider the legally permissible option of chemical retaliation. According to Iranian representatives, the Islamic Republic was no longer ready to unilaterally sustain the consequences of Iraq's crimes. (CD/PV.308, 1985: 8–12 and A/40/PV.20, 1985: 56–62)

Simultaneously, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted that even if chemical retaliation seemed to be the only effective way to counter Iraq's chemical warfare, the Islamic Republic was committed, for the time being at least, to nurturing the values and principles it was speaking for. The use of chemical weapons was declared to be Iran's last resort. Iranian authorities thus implied that by relying on diplomacy and not on military force, the Islamic Republic wanted to avoid losing the

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[36] By 1985, Iraq had managed to improve its chemical warfare capabilities in two central ways. First, the Iraqis had overcome problems with their chemical munitions' timing fuses. Secondly, the Iraqis had managed to improve the quality of their tabun arsenal and hence saturate larger areas with that gas. As for the Iranian claims that Iraq used cyanide gas in the Iran–Iraq war, they remained, and still remain, unproven. (Hiltermann 2007: 66–67)

[37] In his letter of May 1985 to the UN, Iran's foreign minister stated that the world organization and its Security Council "must mobilize all international means in their power" to immediately stop the Iraqi use of chemical armaments. The Islamic Republic also repeated its position according to which the application of international instruments dealing with chemical weapons cannot be conditional upon a cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war. As regards the Security Council, it had, on 25 April 1985, reacted to the UN chemical weapons investigator's report by condemning the renewed use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war and by urging both warring parties to observe international humanitarian law. While the statement issued by the Security Council did not condemn Iraq for chemical weapons use, it did, however, make a reference to Iranian soldiers as the victims of chemical armaments. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1985*, 1989: 242, 248; Hiltermann 2007: 69 and Robinson 1986: 161)

moral superiority it believed it possessed over Iraq in the war.[38] Iran's diplomatic openings in 1985 included the request, made in February, for the stationing of a permanent UN expert mission in Tehran to investigate Iraq's chemical weapons use – an initiative which did not find adequate support within the world organization. Furthermore, the representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed the urgency of international deliberations on the development of a diplomatic mechanism that would ensure that states respect international regulations. This Iranian call was directed, among others, to the national delegations working on the CWC. Even though Iranian authorities continued to acknowledge the importance of the creation of an effective disarmament instrument concerning chemical weapons, they strongly criticized the CWC negotiators' priorities in their talks at the CD. In the Iranian view, priority should be given to measures that aim to stop current crimes and not to diplomatic discussions that focus on the future. (CD/PV.308, 1985: 9–12 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1985*, 1989: 247)

In February 1986, the Islamic Republic informed the international community about Iraq's large-scale use of chemical armaments during Iran's ultimately victorious Wal Fajr-VIII land offensive against the Faw peninsula on the west side of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.[39] In the wake of Iraq's intensive chemical attacks, which caused serious problems for Iranian soldiers who lacked chemical defence equipment and training to use protective gear,[40] Iran strongly condemned Iraq's chemical assaults and continued to call on the international community to react to the Iraqi operations without delay.[41] In the Islamic Republic's view, Iraq's chemical attacks – which, Iranian officials alleged,

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[38] According to Wright (1989: 185), the consideration of moral superiority played a central role in Iranian decision-makers' war-time deliberations on whether to chemically attack Iraq or not.

[39] According to Iranian officials, Iraq's first chemical operation in 1986 had taken place in January. The Islamic Republic accused Iraq of chemical weapons use in the Yibis area on 25 and 26 January and in the Ain-i Khush area on 26 and 27 January, as well as of several chemical attacks conducted on 30 and 31 January in the Chilat area (CD/PV.340, 1986: 31 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1986,* 1990: 232).

[40] The authorities of the Islamic Republic considered the number of chemically injured soldiers in the Faw peninsula threatening and had major problems in finding substitutes for the Iranian casualties. Later, the Islamic Republic claimed that it had suffered 12,000 casualties from chemical weapons alone at Faw. (Tousi 1997: 56 and Hiltermann 2007: 72)

[41] In 1986, Iran accused Iraq of chemical warfare throughout the year. According to Iranian authorities, Iraq resorted to massive use of chemical agents – mustard gas, nerve gas, and cyanide – against Iranian military and civilian targets in February and March in the course of Iran's operation Wal Fajr-VIII as well as Wal Fajr-IX which was launched in northern Iraqi Kurdish territory on 15 February. Iraq's chemical attacks were reported to have caused injuries also to Iraqi soldiers captured by Iran and to those Iraqis situated in no man's land between the warring armies. (CD/PV.340, 1986: 31; CD/PV.348, 1986: 19–20; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1986*, 1990: 232–234 and O'Ballance 1988: 179, 181). Furthermore, Iran claimed that, between 21 March and 14 August, Iraq used chemical armaments on five separate occasions, in addition to which the Iraqis were told to have resorted to chemical warfare in September and December 1986. (CD/PV.379, 1986: 4 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1986*, 1990: 234)

were encouraged and fuelled by the "irresponsible attitudes on the part of certain countries" – posed a fundamental dilemma for the international community. As formulated by foreign minister Vilayati at the UN in October 1986: "If a small country such as Iraq can permit itself heedlessly to violate one of the most important international conventions [the Geneva Protocol], what is to guarantee other existing or future conventions?" (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 223; CD/PV.348, 1986: 18 and A/41/PV.19, 1986: 104–105)

As far as the Islamic Republic's own approach to chemical weapons use was concerned, Iranian officials argued that their country was striving hard for the maintenance of respect for the core values of humanity and the regulations of international law.[42] The fact that Iran had not retaliated in kind against Iraq's gross violations of those values and regulations, the Iranians added, testified to Iran's commitment not to use WMD (CD/PV.348, 1986: 18). Nevertheless, the authorities of the Islamic Republic also made it clear that they viewed the punishment of Iraq as a duty and reserved their country the right to defend its national security by all necessary means (CD/PV.370, 1986: 11 and CD/PV. 379, 1986: 5). The Iranian prime minister's announcement in December 1986 that the Islamic Republic had developed its own chemical warfare technology was indicative of the Iranian determination to have the chemical option available.[43] In fact, on 13 February 1986, Iraq claimed to the UN that, on 12 and 13 February, Iran had resorted to the use of mustard gas in the Iran-Iraq war. According to the Iraqi minister of culture and information, Iran's allegations that Iraq was using chemical weapons were made in order to justify the Islamic Republic's own use of such weapons against his country. Iranian authorities categorically denied all

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[42] As one representative of the Islamic Republic stated in March 1986: "[…] international law has always been emphasized by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as being of vital importance for the security of all nations and for the strengthening of […] justice in international relations" (CD/PV.348, 1986: 18).

[43] The existing research literature on Iran's chemical weapons program and capability is mostly based on intelligence information – especially on that of the United States – whose reliability cannot be verified by scholars. Still, the Islamic Republic is believed to have launched a crash program to develop chemical weapons in 1983 or 1984 in response to Iraq's chemical warfare. In the early stages of the program, which was led by the IRGC, Iran purchased the necessary chemical processing equipment and precursors from West European, U.S., and Japanese suppliers. After the imposition of chemical export controls on Iraq and Iran in the mid-1980s, the Islamic Republic was forced to find alternative sources, such as India and Syria, for its chemical imports – even if certain Western suppliers, especially West German, continued to play a central role in the Iranian acquisitions. It is believed that by 1986–1987, the Islamic Republic had developed the capability to produce enough chemical warfare agents for its means of delivery, that is, aerial bombs and artillery shells. The agents produced in war-time Iran included mustard and various kinds of blood gases. Most experts, however, agree that the Islamic Republic was not able to build a militarily significant infrastructure for the production of chemical weapons during the war years.

Iraqi accusations of gas warfare.[44] (Ali 2001: 51 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1986*, 1990: 232)

Even though the demoralizing effect of Iraq's use of chemical armaments was constantly visible in Iran's diplomatic pronouncements of 1986, the Islamic Republic did succeeded in obtaining increased international support for its case against Iraq's chemical warfare. One of the most important events for the Iranians in this respect was the publication of the report of the group of specialists assembled by the UN secretary-general on 24 February 1986 to investigate the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war.[45] After a visit to Iran from 26 February to 3 March 1986, the expert group unanimously concluded that mustard gas had been employed on many occasions against Iranian troops by means of aerial bombs and identified Iraq for the first time conclusively as the culprit. The UN specialists also reported that they had found evidence of the use of nerve gas. On 18 March, the Islamic Republic thanked the secretary-general for the expert group's work and for its "well-balanced and fair" report. Moreover, the Iranian government stressed that it was expecting the international community and the UN Security Council to immediately condemn Iraq for its use of chemical armaments. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1986*, 1990: 233 and CD/PV.348, 1986: 22)

The Security Council's response to the specialist group report came on 21 March in the form of a declaration that explicitly alluded to Iraqi use of chemical weapons against Iranian armed forces and strongly condemned Iraq's continued resort to chemical warfare. In spite of Iran's subsequent nonchalant comment that the Security Council's declaration had come years too late, the fact that the council had finally named and condemned Iraq for violating the Geneva Protocol marked a momentary victory for the Islamic Republic in its diplomatic battle against its enemy. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1986,* 1990: 233–234)

However, as international condemnations did not stop Iraq from resorting to gas warfare, Iranian diplomats were forced to continue to strive for the realization of immediate arms control objectives. Increased international pressure on Iraq to stop the

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(Carus 2000: 7; Karsh 1993: 34–35; Eisenstadt 1998b: 1–2; Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 2006: 28–29 and Lundin et al. 1988: 122)

[44] The question of Iranian use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

[45] Iran had approached the secretary-general on 12 February with a request for a UN mission that would be sent to Tehran to carry out on-site investigations in order to confirm Iraq's latest uses of chemical agents (CD/PV.340, 1986: 31).

use of chemical weapons, a total ban on the exportation to Iraq of chemical substances and chemical-related technology, a UN-led investigation into the suppliers of chemical weapons and substances to Iraq, and the dispatch of a UN investigation team by the secretary-general at the earliest possible time whenever demanded by Iranian authorities were among such declared Iranian objectives. (CD/PV.379, 1986: 4–5 and A/41/PV.19, 1986: 104–106)

Moreover, the Islamic Republic insisted that all states should declare chemical weapons use a war crime,[46] announce their commitment to the Geneva Protocol as well as to the principle of non-first use of chemical weapons, and devote their diplomatic energies to the development of chemical-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. As far as the Islamic Republic's views on the CWC negotiations were concerned, Iranian officials expressed their government's hope that Iraq's chemical attacks would convince the negotiators of the urgent need to hasten the pace of their talks. Yet, at the same time, the Iranians continued to argue that it was more important to defend existing international regulations than to deliberate on future ones. Of the individual treaty-related issues discussed in the negotiations, the questions of compliance and verification received special Iranian attention. Iran's negotiators called for the establishment of an international committee that would have the power to determine, in controversial cases, whether a CWC state party was abiding by its treaty obligations. Such a committee, the Iranians underscored, should also be given the main responsibility for decisions on the destruction of potential treaty violators' chemical weapons stockpiles and production capabilities.[47]

4.1.1.3 The diplomatic endgame, 1987–1988

In the course of 1987, Iraq intensified the scope of its chemical attacks against Iranian targets. By escalating the use of chemical agents on the battlefield, Iraqi military planners hoped to repel Iran's so-called final offensives which aimed to bring the long-lasting war to an end.[48] Iraq resorted to gas warfare throughout 1987, and the officials of

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[46] Before doing that, Iranian officials argued, international bodies such as the International Court of Justice should independently deal with Iraq's violations of the Geneva Protocol, irrespective of whether Iran would officially file a complaint or not (A/41/PV.19, 1986: 106–107).

[47] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.340 (1986: 31); CD/PV.348 (1986: 22); CD/PV.379 (1986: 5, 8) and A/C.1/41/PV.24 (1986: 22).

[48] In 1987, Iraq continued to use chemical weapons against advancing Iranian troops but it also resorted to pre-emptive gas attacks against Iranian forces' staging areas. The tactical purpose of the rear-area gas

the Islamic Republic kept on minutely publicizing Iraq's violations of the Geneva Protocol.[49] Iraq's use of chemical armaments in 1987 reached its peak on 28 June when Iraqi armed forces attacked the Iranian Kurdish town of Sardasht, a regular encampment for Iranian soldiers, with chemical rockets.[50] Outraged by the incident, Iranian authorities pointed out that the attack on Sardasht was the first time that Iraq had poisoned an Iranian town in its totality. The Iranians maintained that the Iraqi attack was without precedent in the history of contemporary warfare and, in fact, the first time in the history of mankind that a populated town had been attacked with chemical weapons.[51] As stated by one Iranian official in October 1987: "The name of Sardasht will be recorded in encyclopedia and history books alongside Hiroshima and Nagasaki as evidence of shame on human civilization." (CD/PV.425, 1987: 3 and A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 8)

Iraq's chemical operations, which contributed to Iranian armed forces' inability to achieve a decisive breakthrough on the war front, significantly increased the political pressure on the Islamic Republic's leaders. Consequently, Iranian officials warned the international community that Iraq's chemical warfare was tinged with increasingly dangerous features. Iraq's calculated targeting of civilian areas, including Iraqi nationals

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attacks was to weaken Iran's frontline capabilities by targeting Iranian supply lines and reserve troops who generally lacked proper chemical protection. The planning of the Iraqi chemical strikes was facilitated by the U.S. government which supplied highly valuable military intelligence on Iran to the Iraqis. In 1987, Iraq also adopted a conscious policy of targeting Kurdish rebels and civilian population – mostly Iraqi and Iranian Kurds – with chemical armaments. The Iraqi leadership's rationale for the use of gas against Iranian civilians was to strike against targets that acted as Iranian troops' staging areas, whereas the aim of the chemical attacks against Iraq's own Kurdish population was to undermine the popular support for the Kurdish insurgency inside the country. In order to make its chemical operations more effective, the Iraqi leadership had, since late 1986, introduced a modified command and control system for its chemical warfare. Up to that time, chemical release authority had been exclusively in the hands of Saddam Hussein, but now individual Iraqi field commanders were allowed to make decisions on the use of gas. (Hiltermann 2007: 12–13, 66–67, 79–80; Russell 2005b: 195–196 and McCarthy and Tucker 2000: 63–65)

[49] According to the representatives of the Islamic Republic, Iraq used chemical weapons in 1987 at least on the following occasions: 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24–25, and 27–29 January; 6 February; 7 and 19 March; 7–11, 15–16, 21–22, and 28 April; 7–8 and 24 May; 14, 21, 26, and 28–29 June; 1 and 11 July; 17–18 September, and on 8 October. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 218, 231–232, 234; CD/PV.404, 1987: 7; CD/PV.406, 1987: 31 and CD/PV.417, 1987: 11)

[50] Immediately after the Sardasht incident, Iran informed that thousands of inhabitants of Sardasht had been affected by Iraq's chemical assault. A year later, in June 1988, Iran claimed that the Iraqi chemical bombardment of four civilian areas of Sardasht had "martyred and wounded" 8,025 people. At the time of the Iraqi attack, the Iranians added, Sardasht had had 12,000 inhabitants. (CD/PV.417, 1987: 11; A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 8 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45–46)

[51] Worried that the Sardasht attack would create widespread fear and panic among the Iranian population, the authorities of the Islamic Republic did not broadcast the news of the attack inside the country (Hiltermann 2007: 85).

themselves,[52] was told by the Iranians to be the most alarming new development.[53] By referring to statements made by captured Iraqi soldiers, Iranian representatives claimed that Iraq now regarded strikes at civilian targets as a standard military procedure. Iranian diplomats even forwarded a message from the Islamic Association of Iranian Physicians to the UN in which the association expressed its view that the objective of Iraq's chemical weapons use was to devastate Iran. The fact that the Iraqi military was deploying new and more deadly chemical compounds, Iranian officials argued, only increased the humanitarian threat posed by Iraq. (CD/PV.406, 1987: 31–32; CD/PV.417, 1987: 11 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 222, 232–234)

As before, the representatives of the Islamic Republic accused the international community and especially the major powers and the UN Security Council[54] of allowing Iraq to continue its chemical warfare. They pointed out that the Iranian people could not help concluding that international silence vis-à-vis Iraq was an indication of a quiet approval of the Iraqi violations. Iranian officials strongly criticized countries such as the United States, France, and the United Kingdom for hindering the Security Council from acting in the matter of chemical weapons use. The Iranians asked, among others, why Western governments supported a NATO doctrine that left the door open for a nuclear response to a military attack carried out by chemical weapons but, at the same time, ignored tragedies such as the one in Sardasht and linked the issue of Iraq's chemical

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[52] The fact that Iraq did not hesitate to use chemical weapons against the Iraqi Kurds who were fighting their own government and even against non-combatant Iraqi Kurds was mentioned by the Iranians as a telling example of the brutality of the regime of Saddam Hussein (A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 8 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 232).

[53] Iran claimed that the Iraqi tactic of chemically attacking innocent civilians was also explicitly referred to in the final report of the specialist group set by the UN secretary-general in the spring of 1987 to investigate the allegations of chemical weapons use in the Iran–Iraq war. In its final report of May 1987, based on visits to Iran and Iraq between 22 April and 3 May, the UN experts stated that they had found numerous civilian casualties of mustard gas attacks in Iran. The experts also reported that they had met local soldiers affected by mustard gas and probably phosgene in Iraq. In the absence of conclusive evidence, however, the expert group was not able to determine how the Iraqi fighters' injuries had been caused. (CD/PV.417, 1987: 11 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 232–233)

[54] In the Iranian view, the actions of the Security Council – including its response to the UN expert group's report of May 1987 which essentially consisted of a condemnation of the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war and of the prolongation of the conflict – proved that the council substantially lacked "the capability for concerted efforts at the political level." Iranian representatives claimed that prevailing international political conditions prevented the council from taking any fundamental position, let alone any just decision, with regard to the Iran–Iraq war. As far as the Security Council resolution 598 of 20 July 1987 – which provided a framework for the termination of all military actions between the belligerents and for a negotiated final settlement – was concerned, the Islamic Republic stated, on 22 July, that the resolution suffered from fundamental defects and lacked the minimum balance necessary for future constructive activities. The Iranians were of the view that any diplomatic move towards ending the war should start with naming Iraq, which eagerly embraced the Security Council's resolution, as the original aggressor and as a repeat violator of the laws of war.

warfare with the termination of the Iran–Iraq conflict. (CD/PV.425, 1987: 4; A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 8–10 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 232–234)

In spite of their deep disappointment with what they viewed as the international community's application of political double standard, the leaders of the Islamic Republic continued to recognize that if they wished to influence Iraq's military behaviour, they had to try to obtain the support of the very same foreign powers that they strongly criticized on diplomatic fora. Hence, Iranian officials underlined the importance of concrete, strong, and prompt international responses to all violations of the Geneva Protocol and called on the community of states to utilize all possible ways to exert pressure on the violators of the protocol, so that the people of the world would not be at the mercy of the "whims and wishes of heartless criminals." Furthermore, the Iranians stressed that political considerations should not play any role in governments' stances on the issue of chemical warfare.[55] If states allowed political calculations to affect their judgement, the Iranian argument went, they would set a highly dangerous precedent by critically lowering the threshold for chemical weapons use in the future.[56] (CD/PV.417, 1987: 12; CD/PV.404, 1987: 7 and A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 11)

In order to prevent Iraq from continuing its chemical warfare – which, the Islamic Republic emphasized, was undergoing alarming changes both in quantitative and qualitative terms – Iranian authorities asked the international community to immediately implement a number of Iraq-related diplomatic measures. First of all, they demanded that all governments that contributed to Iraq's production and deployment of chemical weapons should at once refrain from helping the regime of Saddam Hussein.[57] The Iranians pointed out that a meaningful embargo on the export to Iraq of chemical agents and technology should not only be mandatory to all states and administered by the UN,

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(CD/PV.425, 1987: 4; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 223–224, 233 and Hiltermann 2007: 72)

[55] Take, for example, the following appeal made to the members of the CD by the Islamic Republic's foreign minister in April 1987: "I call on every member of this Conference to be a disarmament ambassador to his country and to the whole world, rather than being the representative of his country to the Conference" (CD/PV.404, 1987: 9).

[56] It should be also mentioned here that, in 1987, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to express their support for the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and other parts of the world (ibid.: 6).

[57] According to Iranian authorities, any assistance to Iraq with the knowledge of that country's continuing resort to chemical warfare itself constituted a crime. While the Iranians acknowledged that many countries had banned the export to Iraq of materials that could be used in the production of chemical armaments, they argued that such bans were not stringent enough. Until such export bans were truly universal, the Iranians maintained, Iraq would be able find chemical substances and technology from alternate suppliers. Also, the Iranians argued that the lists of banned items in the existing export limitation arrangements were not comprehensive enough. (Ibid. and CD/PV.417, 1987: 12)

but it should also be automatic in the sense that such an embargo would apply to all future cases of chemical weapons use as well. (CD/PV.404, 1987: 6; CD/PV.417, 1987: 12 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 232–234)

Moreover, the Islamic Republic's officials called on the UN to immediately send expert missions to study Iraq's chemical weapons use whenever Iran would inform the world organization of such attacks. In addition, the Iranians requested the UN to conduct on-site investigations at chemical weapons production facilities in Iraq. Maintaining that Iraq's chemical warfare had critically weakened the credibility and effectivity of the Geneva Protocol, Iranian officials also called for the formulation, in the UN, of a declaration in which all the member states of the world organization would express their commitment to the protocol's provisions. In the opinion of the Islamic Republic, such universal endorsement of the Geneva Protocol, together with an international agreement on how to punish the violators of that legal instrument, would constitute a significant incentive for non-use of chemical armaments, especially at a time when the world was still waiting for the completion of the CWC negotiations.[58]

As far as the CWC talks were concerned, Iranian negotiators pointed out that due to Iran's fate as a victim of Iraq's extensive use of chemical armaments, the Islamic Republic regarded the planned convention as a highly important instrument and that it devoted a lot of its diplomatic resources to the successful and expeditious conclusion of the multilateral negotiations at the CD. As before, the Iranians also claimed that their country's victim status gave extra credibility to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic positions on chemical disarmament and called on national CWC delegations to take the lessons learned by Iran into account when working on the details of the draft convention. The Iranian delegation itself continued to prioritize compliance and verification issues in the treaty talks. The Islamic Republic supported the creation of a comprehesive verification and on-site inspection mechanism for the CWC, but added that such a mechanism would not guarantee the effective and trustworthy functioning of the convention unless there was an arrangement in place for international punitive measures against the states parties that would "seriously and deliberately" violate the treaty provisions. Iranian officials referred to the behaviour of Iraq in the Iran–Iraq conflict as a sufficient justification for clear and watertight CWC sanctions procedures. However, before deciding on the final form of the convention's sanctions system, the

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[58] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.406 (1987: 32); CD/PV.417 (1987: 12); *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987* (1992: 232) and A/C.1/42/PV.17 (1987: 12).

Iranians added, it was necessary for the international community to decisively tackle the burning issue of Iraq. If nothing was done to stop Iraq's chemical crimes, the Iranian argument went, the future international treaty banning chemical weapons would be built on a very weak foundation. (CD/PV.404, 1987: 5, 7; CD/PV.406, 1987: 31–32 and CD/PV.425, 1987: 3–5)

The representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that their own government would continue to abide by existing international regulations dealing with chemical armaments and to strictly follow the religious and humanitarian principles that guided Iranian decision-making. The Iranians vehemently rejected the accusations made by Iraq and countries such as Egypt, Israel, and the United States that Iran itself was resorting to gas warfare. Even though the Geneva Protocol did not forbid Iran to respond to Iraq's chemical attacks in kind, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, their country had never used chemical weapons. To support their claim, they referred, among others, to the UN specialist group report of May 1987 which did not make any mention of Iranian use of WMD. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic kept on retaining itself the right to resort to any measure in legitimate self-defence against Iraq's chemical assaults. This point was emphasized, for example, by prime minister Mir Husain Musavi who, on 27 December 1987, told the Iranian parliament that the Islamic Republic had produced sophisticated chemical weapons but that it would not use them as long as it was not forced to do so. Musavi's declaration was a clear signal of the fact that, during 1987, the Iranian leadership's concerns over Iraq's employment of chemical armaments only deepened.[59]

In the course of 1988, the final year of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic's representatives intensified their diplomatic efforts against chemical weapons, for the challenges posed to their country by Iraq's chemical warfare seemed more acute than ever. First of all, Iraq used huge amounts of chemical agents to support its highly successful ground offensives against Iran between mid-April and June 1988.[60] Secondly, the intensification of missile exchanges between Iraq and Iran, the so-called war of the cities, raised great concerns among Iranians that Iraq – whose officials openly threatened to launch chemical attacks on Iranian cities – might target Iran's

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[59] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.409 (1987: 23); A/C.1/42/PV.17 (1987: 23); *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987* (1992: 231–232) and Ali (2001: 51).

[60] For the military developments on the land front in the spring and summer of 1988, see Cordesman and Wagner (1990: 369–375, 381–390). It should be noted here that officers from the U.S. Defense

population centers with missiles equipped with chemical payloads.[61] Finally, Iraq's employment of lethal gas against its own citizens in the Iraqi Kurdish town of Halabja on 16 March that year – presumably resulting in the death of several thousand civilians[62] – seemed to confirm the Iranian belief that the government of Saddam Hussein knew very few, if any, limits to the use of WMD against the Islamic Republic.[63]

The case of Halabja, the most disastrous incident of chemical weapons use in the course of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, provided a rallying point for Iranian officials who fiercely called on the international community to put an end to Iraq's breaches of the Geneva Protocol and customary international law.[64] According to Iranian authorities, the "holocaust" or "genocide" of Halabja, as they described it,[65] had to convince even the most biased supporters of Iraq of the evil nature of Saddam Hussein's regime. The atrocities committed against civilians in Halabja, the Iranians argued, were a logical extension of Iraq's earlier behaviour, an act which the officials of the Islamic Republic had continuously warned about in the past, particularly after the Sardasht incident of June 1987 (CD/PV.453, 1988: 4 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 46).[66]

Iran's diplomatic outbursts of anger, which the authorities of the Islamic Republic felt more than entitled to, were supplemented with strong demands for preventive and

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Intelligence Agency were reportedly directly involved in planning Iraq's chemical operations at the time (Hiltermann 2007: 140).

[61] Take, for example, the following mention made by an Iranian representative at the CD in April 1988: "They [the Iraqis] have determined that several big Iranian cities will be attacked with chemical weapons" (CD/PV.456, 1988: 7). The large numbers of people fleeing Tehran in the spring of 1988 – Wright (1989: 174) estimates that at least a quarter of the capital's 12 million residents left the city – also testified to the major psychological terror effect Iraq's missiles and chemical weapons had on Iranians.

[62] Official Iranian sources speak of a death toll of 5,000 civilians. However, the exact number of chemical fatalities in Halabja is not known.

[63] In fact, during the final year of the Iran–Iraq war, the Iraqis did not even try to deny their use of chemical agents against Iranians. On 1 July 1988, Iraq's foreign minister openly admitted Iraq's chemical weapons use and justified it by claiming that Iran had started the chemical warfare (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 389).

[64] The interpretation that Iraq's chemical warfare breached customary international law had not been actively put forth by Iranian officials since 1984 (A/S-15/PV.19, 1988: 382 and A/S-15/PV.21, 1988: 423).

[65] The war-time comparisons made by the Islamic Republic between World War II crimes and the actions of Saddam Hussein's Iraq intensified after the Halabja incident. Take, for example, the following Iranian characterization from March 1988: "In Auschwitz, men and women were dragged to gas baths, but in Halabja poison and gas were taken to the houses of people" (CD/PV.453, 1988: 3).

[66] The UN Security Council reacted to the Halabja attack – and to the subsequent UN investigation of chemical weapons use which had pointed to the increase in the number of chemical casualties in the Iran–Iraq war, to the increased severity of the injuries sustained by them, as well as to the rising share of civilians among the victims – by adopting resolution 612 of 9 May 1988 in which it expressed its dismay at the intensification of chemical warfare in the Iran–Iraq war, vigorously condemned the continued use of chemical weapons in the conflict, and called on both countries to refrain from future use of chemical

punitive international measures against Iraq.[67] In the words of Iran's foreign minister: "[…] even strongly worded positions will not be sufficient. Only, and I repeat only, by practical and unified action can we prevent the repetition of such crimes." Iranian suggestions for international action vis-à-vis Iraq continued to include calls for immediate measures that would prevent the sale to Iraq of materials and technology needed in the production of chemical armaments[68] as well as for the establishment of mechanisms, such as a system of permanent inspectors, to inspect and monitor Iraqi facilities producing chemical weapons. Furthermore, Iran proposed the formation of permanent international expert teams to investige – and hence to deter states from resorting to – chemical weapons use in the future. In addition, the Islamic Republic underscored the importance of a universal declaration in which governments would explicitly express anew their recommitment to the obligations of the Geneva Protocol. (CD/PV.453, 1988: 3 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 47–48)

In the course of 1988, the Islamic Republic kept on maintaining that it had never resorted and would never resort to the use of chemical weapons which was both illegal and immoral.[69] Even though Iraq's intensified chemical warfare had significantly undermined the morale of both the Iranian military and the Iranian population, the authorities of the Islamic Republic claimed that Iraq's employment of chemical armaments had made no difference in the war equation. According to them, Iran had already demonstrated its ability to militarily respond to Iraq's crimes on the battlefield and, therefore, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic calls for international measures against Iraq and particularly against its civilian-targeted gas attacks stemmed purely from ethical and humanitarian considerations. (CD/PV.445, 1988: 8–9 and CD/PV.456, 1988: 7)

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armaments. Iran soon voiced its displeasure at the fact that the council had not identified Iraq as the party responsible for chemical warfare. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1988*, 1994: 189–190)

[67] In early June 1988, Iranian representatives pointed out at the UN General Assembly's special session devoted to disarmament that, since 13 January 1981, Iraq had resorted to chemical warfare on more than 253 occasions. Even though the Islamic Republic had sent at least 153 letters to the UN with regard to Iraq's chemical weapons use, the Iranians continued, no effective measures had been adopted by the world organization in the matter. (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45–46, 48)

[68] More broadly, the Islamic Republic called, in late March 1988, for the imposition of a comprehensive international arms embargo on Iraq. It should also be noted that following the Halabja attack, the Islamic Republic sought to improve its standing in the eyes of its Gulf neighbours by visiting Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and presenting them with evidence of Iraq's use of chemical weapons in Halabja. (Hiltermann 2007: 152 and Nonneman 2004: 185)

[69] After the gas attack on Halabja, Iraq claimed that it was the Iranians who had been responsible for the attack. Around the same time, the U.S. administration of president Reagan, driven by the belief that Iraq's chemical warfare was a lesser evil than advances made by the Islamic Republic in the war, had started to

If Iraq's behaviour was not checked, Iranian officials argued, not only would Iraq intensify its gas warfare with increasingly disastrous consequences, but the risk of chemical weapons use in other parts of the world would increase as well. Should governments continue to take an indifferent approach to chemical warfare, the Iranians stressed, they would ultimately be compelled to arm themselves with chemical armaments and, in the worst case, resort to in-kind retaliation in order to deter their adversaries from using WMD. As warned by the Iranian representative addressing the CD on 26 April 1988: "What we have to bear in mind is that when the genie is out, nobody will be able to put it back in the bottle. When chemical weapons become a warfare agent in every conflict in the world [...], then it may too late even to feel sorry for this self-inflicted state." (CD/PV.453, 1988: 3–4; CD/PV.460, 1988: 29 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45–47)

Though mainly concentrating on the developments in the Iran–Iraq war, the officials of the Islamic Republic also continued to be involved in the multilateral talks on the CWC. As before, Iran's negotiators underlined the importance of the planned convention to their country and to the whole world and made repeated calls for the conclusion of the negotiations at the earliest possible time.[70] According to the Iranians, the main task for the CWC negotiators was to agree on a disarmament instrument that would be as universal as possible, for the more parties the instrument would succeed in inducing, the better the cause of international peace and security would be served. (CD/PV.445, 1988: 7–8 and CD/PV.453, 1988: 5)

In order to achieve the goal of universality for the CWC, the Islamic Republic argued, the convention should provide incentives for states to become parties to the treaty. One such incentive was the provision of assistance by the other states parties to a member state that had become a victim of chemical weapons use or was under the threat of gas warfare. By referring to article X of the CWC's rolling text – that is, a regularly updated draft of the convention whose outline was first agreed in 1984 – the Iranians stated that in cases of chemical weapons use, the state parties should be obliged to automatically provide assistance to the victim. In cases of threat of use, the help provided by the states

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suggest that Iran had also played a role in the chemical assault on the Kurdish town. (Hiltermann 2007: 3–4, 9–10)

[70] Iran was of the opinion that the negotiation process should be speeded up by holding special CWC sessions at the CD (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 47).

parties could be voluntary.[71] As far as additional accession incentives were concerned, Iran's negotiators supported, among others, the proposal according to which those states that would not join the CWC would be internationally prevented from obtaining certain chemical agents. Furthermore, the delegates of the Islamic Republic alluded to article XI of the draft convention – entitled "Economic and technological development" – and emphasized, like other developing countries, the importance of CWC provisions that would safeguard and advance those countries' economic and technological interests. (CD/PV.453, 1988: 6 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 48)

While Iran made calls for measures that would contribute to the universality of the CWC, it also stressed that once states had joined the convention, they should not be allowed to withdraw their treaty membership. Although the officials of the Islamic Republic defended the traditional right of states to withdraw from international agreements, they stressed that the CWC constituted an exceptional case because the convention would be a reflection of the fundamental needs and values of the international community. In the Iranian opinion, the inclusion of a provision in the CWC that would prevent the states parties from unilaterally terminating their CWC obligations would create general confidence and encourage countries under acute security threats to accede to the treaty. (A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 48)

Still, at the end of the day, it was the question of compliance and verification that continued to dominate Iran's argumentation on the CWC. Iran's concerns related to the issue were aired, among others, by the Islamic Republic's CD ambassador in March 1988: "How much respect can we expect from states for the international agreements we try so hard to formulate in the form of conventions, protocols or others? And what can be done in order to ensure and enhance such respect?" To provide an answer to these questions, the representatives of the Islamic Republic referred to the UN General Assembly resolution 42/37C of November 1987 as a good basis for the CWC's verification system. In that resolution, the General Assembly had requested the UN secretary-general to carry out investigations in response to reports that may be brought to his attention by any UN member state concerning chemical weapons use violating the

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[71] Article X of the draft CWC which the Iranians were referring to, entitled "Assistance and protection against chemical weapons," dealt with the delivery and coordination of protection against chemical weapons, including decontamination equipment and medical help.

1925 Geneva Protocol.[72] In a similar manner, Iran's CWC negotiators argued, the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) – the planned international organization that would be charged with the task of verifying the implementation of the CWC – should immediately and automatically respond to a verification request made by a CWC member state. The reports of such investigations, the Iranians added, should be presented to the Executive Council of the OPCW, to the UN secretary-general, as well as to the UN Security Council. Those instances would then decide how to respond to treaty non-compliance under the CWC. The Iranians themselves made it known that their government would support the implementation of mandatory challenge inspections – that is, on-site investigations conducted by the treaty organization at any location or facility at very short notice – within the CWC framework.[73] (CD/PV.445, 1988: 8; CD/PV.453, 1988: 6 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 47–48)

4.1.2 From the cease-fire to the completion of the CWC

Some students of the Iran–Iraq war have argued that, in the final analysis, the impact of chemical weapons on the overall course of the conflict remained insignificant. According to these observers, although having played an important tactical role in a number of individual battles during the war, strategically chemical weapons only amplified the effects of the primary determinants that steered the Iran–Iraq conflict.[74] Iranian authorities, however, seem to have attached much more weight to the chemical weapons factor in the war equation. Apart from the fact that they referred to Iraq's use of chemical armaments as one of the key factors that contributed to the Islamic

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[72] The General Assembly resolution 42/37C had been entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and to support the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention." For the resolution's content, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987* (1992: 70–71).

[73] Challenge inspections are the most intrusive means of establishing facts in the law of international arms control. They serve two basic functions. First, challenge inspections act as deterrents to non-compliance with an arms control treaty or arrangement. Their second function is to re-establish confidence in an arms control instrument in a situation where one or more state parties are suspected of non-compliance. Challenge inspections differ from so-called routine inspections which refer to investigations made on declared sites at a regulated time. The so-called short notice or ad hoc inspections, in turn, are conducted on declared sites but at a short advance notice. Finally, inspections on invitation become relevant when a state suspected of non-compliance invites inspectors to its territory to confirm that its behaviour has not breached against international regulations or when a state invites outside observers to verify that it is fulfilling certain arms control obligations. (Kurzidem 1998: 249–250 and Hanski 1998: 45–46)

[74] Note, for example, the conclusion by Karsh (1993: 32, 43) who argues that "the overall impact of non-conventional warfare on the general course of the war was marginal" and that "chemical warfare was not

Republic's decision to accept a cease-fire in July 1988,[75] Iran's post-war arms control operations indicated that the issue of chemical warfare occupied a high place in Iranian decision-makers' deliberations on the lessons of the Iran–Iraq conflict.

The conclusion that chemical armaments were an effective military tool was unambiguously expressed in the immediate post-war period by a number of high-ranking Iranian decision-makers, such as Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani. In his address to the IRGC in October 1988, Rafsanjani stated that the Iran–Iraq conflict had illustrated that chemical weapons were a "very decisive" instrument of warfare (Chubin 1989: 22).[76] Iranian comments such as the one by Rafsanjani were indicative of the Iranian leadership's determination to ensure that their country would never again become a victim of chemical warfare and that no actor chemically targeting Iran would be spared from severe consequences. Also, they suggested that the Islamic Republic was committed to the development of a chemical weapons arsenal capable of acting as a military deterrent against foreign adversaries.

The Iranian leitmotif of protecting the country from future WMD attacks heavily guided the Islamic Republic's post-war arms control diplomacy. Accordingly, from the time the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war took effect until the commencement of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict in August 1990, Iran's chemical arms control efforts had two main objectives. First, Iranian officials were mobilized to rally support for an international condemnation of Iraq's war-time chemical crimes and to inform the international community about the threat Iraq's chemical armaments continued to pose in the post-Iran–Iraq-war era. Secondly, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic were instructed to work for the implementation of international measures that would strengthen existing diplomatic arrangements pertaining to chemical arms control and to take active part in the on-going multilateral negotiations on the CWC.

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that crucial for Iraq's war operations." For an opposite scholarly conclusion stressing the central role played by chemical weapons in the 1980–1988 war, see Hiltermann (2007).

[75] According to one Iranian representative, Iraq's chemical weapons, together with its missiles, "broke the backbone" of the Iranian leadership as far as the Islamic Republic's decision to accept the UN Security Council resolution 598 was concerned. Similar conclusions were drawn in post-war Iraq. Iraqi officials admitted that, in their view, chemical armaments, together with SSM, had saved their country from defeat during the war against Iran. By Iraqi accounts, Iraq used some 19,500 chemical bombs, over 54,000 chemical artillery shells, and 27,000 short-range chemical filled rockets in the course of the 1980–1988 war. (Author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [C] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002; Eisenstadt 2000: 64 and Russell 2005b: 194)

[76] For an Iranian statement to this effect presented at an international arms control forum, see CD/PV.625 (1992: 4).

In the light of the delicate 'no war, no peace' situation between the Islamic Republic and Iraq at the time, thus, Iraq's capabilities continued to dominate Iranian thinking on chemical arms control. After Iraq directed its military intentions towards Kuwait in 1990, and after the Kuwait-related ambitions of Saddam Hussein were overwhelmingly crushed by the U.S.-led coalition in the brief war of January–February 1991, however, the bilateral aspect in Iran's chemical arms control operations began to shift to the background. But even though the Islamic Republic now had the breathing space to devote more diplomatic energies on broader, and less urgent, regional and international arms control issues, Iran's war-time experience as a victim of gas warfare never ceased from being the ultimate factor that steered the Islamic Republic's chemical arms control operations.

4.1.2.1 Iran's chemical diplomacy between the two Gulf conflicts

The information provided by the authorities of the Islamic Republic about the number of Iranian victims of Iraq's war-time use of toxic weapons has been ambiguous. In April 1988, three months before Iran unconditionally accepted the UN Security Council resolution 598, the officials of the Islamic Republic announced that some 27,500 Iranians had been injured and 260 died as a result of Iraq's gas warfare (Karsh 1993: 43). Ten years later, in March 1998, they stated that 60,000 Iranians had been exposed to Iraq's chemical weapon attacks and that many still needed treatment (Chubin and Green 1998: 159).[77] An article from April 2001, written by the Islamic Republic's deputy foreign minister, in turn maintained that more than 100,000 Iranian people, both military and civilian, had been exposed to the chemical warfare agents used by Iraq in the 1980s (Zarif 2001: 1).[78]

Whatever the exact number of the Iranian casualties, after the war, the authorities of the Islamic Republic continued to strongly criticize foreign and especially Western governments for their indifference towards Iraq's war-time deployment of chemical armaments. That indifference and negligence, Iranian officials argued, had encouraged Iraq to step up its gas warfare during the war, resulted in immense humanitarian

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[77] In November 2000, a representative of an Iranian war veteran organization told that over 15,000 veterans suffering from chemical-related injuries had died in the 12 years after the end of the Iran–Iraq war (*IRNA*, 13 November 2000).

suffering, and established a highly dangerous precedent of political expediency suggesting that states could use toxic weapons with complete impunity. As a result, the Iranians added, chemical armaments had become a tempting option for military planners all over the world and, therefore, the most immediate threat to world security.[79] (A/43/PV.14, 1988: 63, 76–77; Tabatabai 1989: 321 and A/C.1/44/PV.13. 1989: 4–5)

In order to rectify the alarming situation as well as the damages done to the authority and prestige of the UN and international law by Iraq's unhindered use of chemical weapons during the Iran–Iraq conflict, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued, governments should embark upon measures aimed at "eliminating chemical weapons from the face of the earth." In the Iranian opinion, the international awakening resulting from Iraq's chemical attack against civilians in Halabja in March 1988,[80] together with the general thaw in the international political scene of the late 1980s, had created a promising window of opportunity for chemical disarmament.[81] (A/43/PV.14, 1988: 77 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 6)

Iran stressed that pending the completion of the CWC, the international community should implement a set of substitutive or transitory measures focusing on the acute threat of chemical weapons. As a first step, Iranian officials put forth a proposal for an impartial study on the use of chemical armaments in the Iran–Iraq war. According to the representatives of the Islamic Republic, such a study would increase the awareness of the general public worldwide of the consequences of chemical warfare and – through the subsequent increase in sentiments against chemical weapons – pressure

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[78] This figure was also presented to the author in July 2002 (author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002) and was further mentioned in an Iranian diplomatic statement made in The Hague in October 2002 (Zamaninia 2002: 2).

[79] Iranian officials underscored that, compared with nuclear weapons, chemical armaments were cheap and easy to manufacture. This, the Iranians added, was a central factor that made chemical weapons a more topical threat to international security than nuclear weapons. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 52)

[80] Iran proposed that the date of Iraq's chemical assault on Halabja should be designated the international day of the campaign against chemical weapons (A/43/PV.14, 1988: 77).

[81] Yet, it should be noted that the diplomatic optimism expressed by the Iranians was reserved. For example, in late 1988, responding to France's offer to host an international conference in Paris in January 1989 to consider the increased threat of chemical warfare and to reaffirm states' commitment to the Geneva Protocol, the representatives of the Islamic Republic asked why such a conference had not been held at the time when Iraq was poisoning Iranian soldiers and civilians with chemical armaments. While expressing its support to the "belated" Paris Conference – which was originally based on a U.S. diplomatic initiative – Iran emphasized that the conference should not be used as a venue to whitewash Iraq's past crimes or to cover up the fact that Iraq had received substantial foreign assistance for its chemical weapons program during the Iran–Iraq conflict. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 54–56 and A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 69–70)

governments to make speedy progress in chemical disarmament.[82] (A/C.1/43/PV.53, 1988: 29–30)

Meanwhile, the Iranians continued, all states should pledge that they would not use chemical armaments under any circumstances. The countries that had not signed the Geneva Protocol should be invited to adhere to it within a specific period of time, and the parties to the protocol that had made reservations on its implementation should repeal them as soon as possible so that the protocol would not be viewed as an instrument that only banned the first use of chemical weapons. Iranian authorities also emphasized the importance of national and international bans on the transfers of technology for the production of chemical weapons. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 53; A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 71 and A/C.1/43/PV.53, 1988: 31)

Moreover, the Iranians maintained that the international community should be prepared to act upon any allegation of chemical weapons use. In the Iranian view, such allegations should be investigated according to the mechanism formulated in the UN General Assembly resolution 42/37C of 1987.[83] If chemical weapons were used, all governments should condemn such actions without any "biased political or bilateral considerations" in order to create strong moral pressure against the states resorting to gas warfare. In addition, countries using chemical armaments should be immediately punished by the international community. Iranian officials pointed to the application of international sanctions, such as trade embargos, and underscored that, if necessary, the UN Security Council should respond to gas warfare also through means that would involve the use of armed force as mentioned in Chapter VII of the UN Charter.[84] (A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 68, 72–73 and A/44/PV.13, 1989: 96)

As for the on-going negotiations on the CWC, the Islamic Republic continued to strive for the realization of the objectives it had already outlined during the war years. Iran emphasized the importance of a treaty that would be as foolproof and intrusive as

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[82] The chemical arms control proposals made by the Islamic Republic immediately after the Iran–Iraq war reflected the more or less expressed Iranian premise that without acknowledging and condemning the chemical crimes committed in the past, the international community would not be able to credibly and efficiently respond to future challenges posed by chemical armaments (A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 71 and A/C.1/43/PV.39, 1988: 13).

[83] See above section 4.1.1.3.

[84] Interestingly, even though the Iranians continued to castigate the UN Security Council for its performance during the Iran–Iraq war, they simultaneously defined the council as the ultimate actor in the formulation of punitive measures against countries using chemical weapons. Take, for example, the following remark made by an Iranian diplomat in November 1988: "After all, we have to bear in mind that the [UN] Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and that member states have agreed to accept and carry out its decisions in accordance with the Charter" (A/C.1/43/PV.39, 1988: 13).

possible, for the Iranian people, the Islamic Republic's argument went, could not afford to risk their security and to give up the chemical weapons option in exchange for a weak convention. The officials of the Islamic Republic, who called for the creation of a treaty that would be of unlimited duration, also demanded that the states parties' adherence to the CWC should be globally verifiable, unconditional, and subject to no differing interpretations. In the Iranian view, the universality of the CWC was a fundamental goal that had to be attained.[85] Especially the participation of countries that had a record of chemical weapons use or of states that had assisted others to obtain the technology to produce and employ toxic weapons was considered by the Iranians to be of absolute importance. (CD/PV.487, 1989: 18 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

More specifically, the Islamic Republic argued that the U.S. negotiation position to allow chemical weapons states to retain two percent of their stockpiles until all countries capable of producing chemical armaments had become parties to the CWC was untenable. One could not possess chemical weapons and simultaneously demand others not to have them. The Iranians were also of the opinion that the destruction of chemical weapons, as stipulated in the CWC, should not take as long as 10 years as envisaged in the rolling text. Moreover, the Islamic Republic stated that the countries in possession of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons and those with a record of gas warfare should be the ones starting the destruction process.[86] Iranian negotiators also insisted that the destruction process should start from the most sophisticated armaments and the most lethal chemical agents. (CD/PV.514, 1989: 6; A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 8–9 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

As far as the investigation and verification mechanism of the CWC was concerned, Iran made calls for an effective system that would leave no room for violations. If a country would resort to toxic weapons use, the Islamic Republic noted, it should be subjected to punitive measures in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. What Iranian officials declared to be crucial in this connection was the adoption of the principle of automaticity. As pointed out by the representative of the Islamic Republic

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[85] This goal was told to be all the more important for countries that had been victims of gas warfare and for states that lived under the constant threat of chemical weapons. Such countries, the Iranians maintained, should also be guaranteed a strong representation in the planned international organization responsible for the implementation of the CWC. (A/44/PV.13, 1989: 96 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 13)

[86] According to the Iranians, the destruction process should begin already prior to the conclusion of the CWC. Thus, the Islamic Republic welcomed the efforts made by the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s to reduce the size of their chemical arsenals. Yet the Iranians also noted that the arms control advances made between the two superpowers should not take place at the expense of the multilateral efforts directed towards the CWC. (A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 8–9)

addressing the CD in March 1990: "Iran has been a victim of chemical weapons as well as political selectivity. We cannot therefore leave our security at the mercy of political decisions." (CD/PV.487, 1989: 18 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

Accordingly, in the Iranian view, all parties to the CWC should automatically be entitled to receive all relevant information, including information on possible treaty violations, without any "political prejudice." In the same vein, the processes for routine and challenge inspections as well as for inspections in the event of alleged chemical weapons use should not be hampered by "political decisions." The officials of the Islamic Republic also maintained that decisions on punitive measures against treaty violators should be based on facts on the ground, not on political considerations. Finally, the Iranians demanded that international assistance to the victims of chemical warfare or to countries under the threat of toxic weapons use, as envisioned in article X of the rolling text, should be automatic. (CD/PV.543, 1990: 12)

Not surprisingly, after the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic's CWC negotiators invested a lot of diplomatic energy in debates on article X of the draft convention. According to the Iranians, states had to be assured that if they became victims of gas warfare, the international community would come to their assistance. In Iran's view, such assistance, defined by Iranian negotiators as a significant incentive for CWC accession, had to be both automatic and mandatory. Following the war, the authorities of the Islamic Republic, who were confronted with the major task of post-war reconstruction, also started to devote more diplomatic attention to article XI of the draft CWC which dealt with the economic and technological development of the states parties as well as with international cooperation in the field of non-military chemical activities. Iran's views on article XI were presented not only by the Islamic Republic's officials but also by the representatives of Iran's chemical industry. Thus, at the Canberra Government-Industry Conference Against Chemical Weapons held in September 1989,[87] for example, the Islamic Republic's approach to article XI was presented by a chemical industry member of the Iranian delegation. In his address to the conference, the Iranian delegate expressed his government's view that the CWC should take into account the legitimate concerns and needs of the developing world's chemical industries. He stressed that the CWC should facilitate economic and technological

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[87] The purpose of the international conference organized by the Australian government in Canberra in September 1989 was to provide a forum for government and industry representatives to exchange views on the implications of the CWC and on the areas of concern with respect to the planned convention. For a discussion of the Canberra conference, see Flowerree (1993: 1015–1016).

cooperation – first and foremost in the form of chemical material and technology transfers – between developed and developing countries in order to compensate for the restrictions and obligations imposed by the convention. According to the Iranian delegate, the application of "unnecessary and discriminate" restrictions in chemical transfers – that is, the application of restrictions not agreed within the CWC treaty framework – was totally unacceptable.[88]

The Islamic Republic's general diplomatic argumentation on chemical disarmament during the months between the two Gulf conflicts continued to strongly reflect Iran's anxiety about Iraq's chemical arsenal.[89] Given that the peace discussions between the Islamic Republic and Iraq had not brought about any significant results, the issue of Iraqi chemical weapons was regularly addressed by Iran. The officials of the Islamic Republic continued to claim that the problem of Iraqi chemical armaments had been created by the foreign governments that had supported Iraq's chemical weapons efforts in the course of the Iran–Iraq war and insisted that now, after the hostilities between the two countries had ended, those governments could not anymore use the argument of not wanting to get involved in the war as an excuse for not tackling the problem of Iraq's WMD. At the same time, however, the Iranians offered an explanation of why it was unlikely that Western governments would deal with the issue of Iraq's toxic weapons. By threatening to reveal the names of its WMD suppliers, the Iranian argument went, Iraq was successfully blackmailing Western powers for political concessions.[90] (A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 69–70; A/C.1/43/PV.53, 1988: 28 and CD/PV.514, 1989: 5)

Pointing out that the 'no peace, no war' situation between Iran and Iraq bred tension and insecurity in the Gulf and the wider Middle East region as well as made it difficult for regional governments to give up the chemical weapons option and to accede to the

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[88] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.479 (1988: 3); CD/PV.514 (1989: 6); Dastgheib (1989: 323–324) and CD/PV.543 (1990: 13).

[89] For Iranian statements alluding to the acute threat of Iraq's WMD capabilities, see A/44/PV.13 (1989: 94–95) and CD/PV.534 (1990: 21). As noted by Parsi (2007: 143), many military strategists in Iran believed at the time that another confrontation with Iraq was inevitable and that the next conflict between the two parties would see the use of WMD at the very outset.

[90] This was what, in the Iranian view, had happened, for example, in connection with the international conference on chemical weapons held in Paris in January 1989. The fact that the final declaration of the conference had not mentioned Iraq by name when referring to recent cases of chemical weapons use was explained by Iranian officials to have resulted from Iraq's successful threat to reveal the names of its European suppliers of chemical agents and technology if mentioned as a culprit in that document (CD/PV.514, 1989: 6). It should be noted that following the end of the Iran–Iraq conflict, Iranian diplomats did not mention the individual countries that had supported Iraq's war-time chemical weapons efforts by name, but mostly used broad, undefined terms such as "certain states" to allude to such countries.

planned CWC,[91] Iranian officials made constant calls for international measures that would lead to the immediate implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 598.[92] Even though the Iranians recognized that, for the time being at least, the prospects for broad Middle Eastern participation in the CWC were dim,[93] they nevertheless regularly voiced their hope for a wide and simultaneous adherence to the CWC by the countries of the region and for the full implementation of the convention in the Middle East.[94] Pending the completion of the CWC and Middle Eastern states' full participation in the future treaty, Iranian representatives noted, scrupulous regional observance of the Geneva Protocol was of utmost importance. Moreover, the Islamic Republic spoke for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone and more broadly of a zone free of all WMD in the Middle East as a remedy to the problem of regional WMD. (A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 11; CD/PV.543, 1990: 11–13 and A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 58)

In the months between the two Gulf conflicts, Iranian officials also continued to point out that that their government's post-war commitment to chemical disarmament derived from the war-time experiences of the Iranian people and from the Islamic Republic's moral values.[95] This national commitment to chemical disarmament was told by the Iranians to be a logical continuation of the Islamic Republic's war-time policy.

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[91] Despite these warnings, however, Iran confirmed in connection with the 1989 Paris Conference that the Islamic Republic was ready to join the CWC, even if Iraq refused to do so (Herby 1992: 42).

[92] It should be noted that the UN Security Council resolution 598, which established the framework for peace negotiations between Iran and Iraq, did not include any specific recommendations or demands concerning chemical weapons. It only demanded both parties to discontinue all military actions and to withdraw all their forces to the internationally recognized borders. In addition, the resolution requested the UN secretary-general to examine, in consultation with Iran and Iraq and other regional states, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region.

[93] Consider, for example, the following statement made by the Iranian foreign minister at the CD in March 1990: "To be frank, if the [chemical weapons] convention was ready today, the chances of its success in our region would be somewhere near zero" (CD/PV.543, 1990: 11).

[94] Contrary to the position adopted by the great majority of Arab governments at the time, the Islamic Republic was of the opinion that the issues of chemical and nuclear weapons should not necessarily be linked with each other. As put by the Islamic Republic's foreign minister: "[...] while we share the concerns about the proliferation of nuclear arms in our region and its parallels with chemical weapons, we do not feel that there has to be a direct link if this would compromise the fate of the CW convention." The emphasis put by the Islamic Republic on the issue of chemical weapons was evident also in the Iranian position according to which the establishment of a regional security system in the Gulf – a central post-war foreign policy objective of the Islamic Republic – was subordinate to the more urgent aim of chemical disarmament in the region. However, Iran did not preclude the possibility that regional efforts in the field of chemical disarmament would be implemented in the context of an indigenous security arrangement. (Ibid.: 12–13)

[95] Some representatives of the Islamic Republic went as far as claiming that, for Iran, the issue of chemical weapons was "totally independent of the issue of bilateral relations and bilateral issues between the two countries of Iran and Iraq." For those representatives, it was the Iranians' "deep moral and inner urge for the abolishment and complete eradication of chemical weapons" which explained their

Although Iran had possessed all the means to manufacture chemical weapons on a large scale and to use them extensively in retaliation during the war, the authorities of the Islamic Republic claimed, it had never resorted to gas warfare.[96] Iranian officials described their country's alleged self-restraint as "unprecedented in history" and said that their country had set a benchmark for state behaviour in international relations. The Islamic Republic's moral steadfastness, they added, was also evident in the way it had based its post-war security policy on diplomacy and particularly on the still unfinished CWC, even if it could have converted the capabilities and expertise acquired in the area of chemical armaments during the Iran–Iraq war into a military deterrent against immediate and potential threats to Iran's national security. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 56; CD/PV.514, 1989: 4 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 11)

4.1.2.2 From the Gulf Conflict of 1990–1991 to the final draft of the CWC

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 changed the political and military environment in which the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic had operated after the end of the Iran–Iraq war. As Iraq's armed forces became fully occupied with the realization of Saddam Hussein's military objectives in Kuwait, the threat of Iraqi chemical weapons ceased to be an immediate security concern for the Iranians. This was the case especially after the U.S.-led coalition forces defeated Iraq in the military operation known as Desert Storm between 17 January and 27 February 1991.[97] The creation, in the UN Security Council resolution 687 of April 1991, of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to verify the post-war destruction of Iraq's chemical, biological, and missile capabilities[98] meant that, from Iran's point of view, the

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government's active diplomacy in the realm of chemical disarmament. (A/C.1/43/PV.16, 1988: 51–52; A/C.1/43/PV.21, 1988: 69–70 and CD/PV.543, 1990: 11)

[96] Iranian authorities strongly rejected Iraq's post-war accusations that Iran's armed forces had resorted to the use of toxic weapons in the course of the Iran–Iraq conflict. According to them, Iraqi officials made such "baseless accusations" in order to "distort the very clear facts about the painful and horrendous use of chemical weapons by Iraq." The official Iranian denials were echoed by the representatives of Iran's chemical industry. As put by one industry representative, Iran's chemical industry "never took any measure to divert its products for the production of chemical weapons" during the war. Instead, he added, the chemical industry of the Islamic Republic "put its valuable scientific and technical experience at the disposal of the government to contribute to the early conclusion of the Convention for prohibition of chemical weapons." (A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 87–88 and Dastgheib 1989: 323)

[97] It should be noted that, during the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991, the Iranians had regularly expressed their concern for the threats made by Iraq to use chemical weapons against its adversaries (CD/PV. 582, 1991: 4; A/46/PV.66, 1991: 52 and CD/PV.625, 1992: 6).

[98] In exchange for a cease-fire and armistice, Iraq agreed to respect all relevant UN Security Council resolutions related to the Gulf conflict, including the Security Council resolution 687 which demanded the

international community had finally embarked upon measures the Islamic Republic had been championing for years.[99]

But although Iraq's military defeat and the efforts by UNSCOM to disarm Iraq highly served Iran's national interests and its objectives in the realm of chemical disarmament,[100] the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 also generated new security problems for the Islamic Republic. On the one hand, Iranian officials were of the opinion that the conflict had accelerated regional arms racing both in the area conventional armaments and WMD. For this reason, the Iranians asserted, there was an urgent need in the Gulf region and the wider Middle East for arms control measures that would address both weapons categories.[101] On the other hand, the massive influx of Western military forces to the Persian Gulf following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was something the Iranians had not hoped for. Not only eroding the prospects for the establishment of the Iranian-promoted indigenous security system in the Gulf, the presence of foreign forces in the region was viewed by the Islamic Republic as a direct threat to regional and Iran's national security. This Iranian threat assessment included a WMD dimension, for already during Desert Storm the officials of the Islamic Republic had claimed, among others, that the U.S. fleets in the Gulf had access to chemical weapons.[102] (A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 35; CD/PV.582, 1991: 4 and Chubin 1997b: 9)

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government of Saddam Hussein to unconditionally accept the destruction, removal or rendering harmless, under international supervision, of all Iraqi chemical and biological weapons, all stocks of agents and all related subsystems and components, as well as of all research, development, support and manufacturing facilities.

[99] The Gulf conflict provided Iranian authorities with an opportunity to argue that had the international community taken heed of the Islamic Republic's earlier warnings, Iraq's WMD, including its chemical weapons, would have never become a topical threat. Some Iranian officials could not conceal their satisfaction with the irony that was present in the confrontation between Iraq and Western governments. Take, for example, the following Iranian remark from 14 February 1991: "It is the paradox of history that the weapons provided to Iraq have now turned against their own suppliers." (CD/PV.582, 1991: 2, 4)

[100] As subsequently noted by one Iranian representative: "Of course the weakening of Iraq's military capabilities highly benefited us. The outcome of the [Gulf] conflict clearly contributed to our security (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002)." Given the Islamic Republic's declared policy of neutrality in the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, Iranian authorities officially kept quiet about their satisfaction with Iraq's military defeat in the war against the U.S.-led coalition forces. During and after the Gulf conflict, Iran called on the Iraqi government to abide with all relevant UN resolutions and thus also to allow UNSCOM to carry out its disarmament activities inside Iraq. At the same time, the Islamic Republic declared its own commitment to all UN resolutions related to the Gulf conflict. (A/45/PV.5, 1990: 47)

[101] In addition to calling for arms control in the Middle East, Iran continued to make a linkage between conventional arms control and WMD disarmament – among others, in the context of the issue of transparency in armaments (A/46/PV.66, 1991: 52 and CD/PV.625, 1992: 6).

[102] Subsequently, Iranian representatives referred to the chronic illnesses and symptoms suffered by many veterans of the allied forces who served in the Gulf region during Operation Desert Storm – collectively called the Gulf War syndrome or the Gulf War illnesses (Nicolson et al. 2002: 431) – to support their claim that the coalition forces had been equipped with chemical armaments (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

Nevertheless, in terms of urgency, the new threats to Iran, as portrayed by the authorities of the Islamic Republic, markedly differed from those of the Iran–Iraq war years and the pre-Gulf conflict period. Accordingly, after Iraq's WMD programs had been placed under international scrutiny, Iranian officials were able to more forcefully focus on multilateral international efforts in the field of chemical arms control. Naturally, the negotiations on the CWC – which had intensified as a result of the Iran–Iraq war and had been further hastened by the Gulf conflict as well as by the positive changes in East–West relations – constituted the most important endeavour in this respect.[103] As the negotiations in Geneva moved into the endgame stage, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to underline the importance of the CWC and Iran's commitment to it, although they also aired their regret that the issue of chemical armaments had received minimal international attention at the time when Iranians were being victimized by those WMD (CD/PV.625, 1992: 4).

In the Iranian view, the CWC had to be as comprehensive and universal as possible in order to bring about the elimination of toxic weapons from states' military arsenals. Also, Iranian negotiators stressed, the provisions of the CWC had to be well defined so that the convention would not leave any room for "self-serving political manouvres." In addition to speaking for a final treaty document "devoid of political expediency," the representatives of the Islamic Republic insisted that the CWC should take into account the legitimate interests and concerns of all negotiating parties. As far as the Islamic Republic's own worries were concerned, Iranian officials continued to argue that the major powers should not be allowed to maintain any chemical weapons in their arsenals as a security stock. After the United States gave up its demand for such an inventory in May 1991, Iran expressed its satisfaction that the "discriminatory" U.S. position contradicting the goal of total elimination of chemical weapons had been dropped. (A/45/PV.5, 1990: 49–50; A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 40–41 and A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 38)

Moreover, the negotiators of the Islamic Republic continued to call for the creation of an efficient CWC verification mechanism that would deter the states parties from infringing their treaty obligations and from taking advantage of technological and

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[103] While taking part in the CWC talks, the Iranians also continued to make calls for the strengthening of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. For example, they argued that all reservations made to the protocol by the states parties ought to be removed. Such diplomatic steps, the Iranians added, would help the protocol to "become a part of customary international law." (A/C.1/45/PV.36, 1990: 36 and CD/PV.617, 1992: 49). This position marked a departure from the war-time Iranian interpretations according to which the prohibitions of the Geneva Protocol had already entered into customary international law (see above note 21 p. 221 and note 64 p. 238).

scientific progress in the chemical field for military purposes. However, the Iranians approached the topic of verification also with certain qualifications. First of all, they emphasized that the CWC verification mechanism should not fall into the trap of "excessive verification." Undue interference in routine chemical industry activities that posed little or no risk to the objectives of the CWC was said by the Iranians to have "counter-productive confidence degrading results" that would adversely affect the verification of the chemical facilities truly relevant to the convention as well as increase the costs of verification.[104] In addition, Iranian negotiators insisted that the verification system should not be misused or politically manipulated. The Islamic Republic supported challenge inspections and the right of the states parties to unilaterally ask for a challenge inspection in situations of suspected non-compliance, but it also stressed that such a right should not be maliciously used for the purpose of obtaining information about the states parties' legitimate commercial or military secrets.[105] Furthermore, related to the verification issue, Iran, along with many other developing countries, complained that article II of the draft convention lacked a clear definition of the munitions, devices, and equipment regarded as chemical weapons.[106] The lack of an unambiguous definition of what constituted a chemical weapon, Iranian officials noted, not only had a significant bearing on what the states parties were actually prohibited to possess and obliged to destroy,[107] but it also provided a hypothetical avenue for the state parties to use the verification procedure to the detriment of another member state.[108]

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[104] The concern over the financial implications of verification was a persistent theme in Iran's CWC argumentation and made the Islamic Republic to team up with other developing countries to require the creation of a cost-effective verification system for the convention. In August 1990, at the CD, Iran had presented the results of a national trial inspection that had been carried out to establish whether the various provisions of the draft CWC were applicable in practice. The high financial burden of the inspection had been mentioned by the Iranians as one of the key lessons of their exercise. (CD/PV.625, 1992: 5 and CD/PV.573, 1990: 11)

[105] Hence, Iran's CWC negotiators opposed the view that called for maximum inspection transparency, that is, for a treaty stipulation that would deprive the states parties of the right to prevent the OPCW from carrying out 'anytime, anyplace' inspections on their territories (Limone 2004: 3).

[106] As elaborated upon by one Iranian negotiator: " [...] although there is a clear definition of what is prohibited as regards toxic chemicals and their precursors, there is no comparably clear definition of the munitions, devices and equipment that are also to be regarded as chemical weapons" (Mashhadi 1992: 29).

[107] Iran was also dissatisfied with articles IV and V of the draft convention because they allowed for the possible extension of the duration of the chemical weapons destruction period and the conversion of chemical weapons production facilities without identifying a qualitative order of destruction (Ali 1996: 38).

[108] In addition, Iran, like many other developing countries, was of the opinion that article II of the draft convention did not sufficiently limit the employment of riot control chemical agents to domestic use only. By the same token, Iran was dissatisfied with the fact that article II excluded herbicides as a means of warfare. (Mashhadi 1992: 30)

(CD/PV.573, 1990: 12; A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 39; CD/PV.625, 1992: 5 and Mashhadi 1992: 29–30)

Even though the Iranians managed to exert major diplomatic influence on the content of article X of the draft convention dealing with international assistance and protection against chemical weapons, the Islamic Republic was not happy that in contrast to its wishes and the opinion of many other developing countries, the coordination and delivery of protection within the CWC framework lacked automaticity. Iran underlined the importance of the principle of automaticity – which was contrasted by Iranian negotiators with "political misuse" – also in discussions that concerned the measures that would be taken, under article XII of the CWC, by the OPCW Conference of the States Parties to ensure compliance with the convention and to redress and remedy a situation that contravened the treaty's provisions. (Sims 2001: 58–59; A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 39 and Mashhadi 1992: 30)

The Islamic Republic's willingness to have a say in the implementation and enforcement of the future convention explained the strong emphasis put by the Iranians on the issue of representation in the treaty organization created by the CWC. Iran was particularly sensitive about the composition of the OPCW's Executive Council, the 41-member organ responsible for the promotion of the implementation of, and compliance with, the convention. According to Iranian negotiators, the provisions related to the composition of the planned council were unbalanced, discriminatory, and therefore unacceptable. Iran insisted that the states parties had to have an equal chance to serve in the council and that no state party was entitled to special priviledges. In the Iranian view, the membership mechanism based on the division of the states parties into five geographical groupings meant that the countries belonging to the Asian group with a large number of states parties had lower chances of election to the council than, for example, those of the European grouping. In addition, Iranian negotiators opposed the article VIII provision of the draft CWC prescribing that four states parties of the nine-member Asian quota "shall, as a rule, be the states parties with the most significant national chemical industry in the region as determined by internationally reported and published data."[109] The Islamic Republic held to its views on the Executive Council till the last moment, for Iran's intransigence in the matter delayed the adoption of the final draft of the CWC by the CD on 3 September 1992. After last-minute consultations among the Asian members of the CD that day, Iran ultimately bent to existing

formulations on the Executive Council but only on the understanding that the matter would be taken up again in the future. (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 39; CD/PV.634, 1992: 29 and Mashhadi 1992: 30)

Issues pertaining to article XI of the CWC also occupied a high place on the Islamic Republic's negotiation agenda. In this connection, Iranian officials made three main points. First, they stressed, together with other developing countries, that the provisions of the CWC should not impede the economic and technological development of the states parties. The Iranians pointed out that the safeguarding of peaceful activities in the field of chemical industry was an absolute necessity especially because underdevelopment continued to pose a major threat to developing countries' security and well-being. Thus, Iran lent its diplomatic support to the negotiation position put forth by states such as Egypt that developing countries were entitled to obtain explicit assurances from the developed world in this regard. (A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 41; CD/PV.582, 1991: 2 and Mashhadi 1992: 30)

Secondly, and related to the first point, Iran was among the CWC delegations vehemently demanding that there should be no "discriminatory restrictions" on chemical trade and technology transfers between the states parties. By those restrictions Iran referred first and foremost to the export control activities of the so-called Australia Group, an informal inter-state consultative body established in 1985 to ensure that the member states' exports of certain chemicals as well as of dual-use chemical manufacturing facilities and equipment do not contribute to the proliferation of chemical armaments.[110] According to Iranian negotiators, all restrictions of the Australia Group should be abandoned once the CWC had entered into force. This obligation, the Iranians said, should also be expressly stated in the convention, for developing countries should not be left at the mercy of the faithful implementation of article XI by the industrialized countries. The Islamic Republic's foreign minister justified his government's demands in June 1992 in the following way: "After eight years of war which caused unimaginable ruin and destruction, we [Iranians] need to devote all our energy and resources to reconstruction. [...] restrictions with no relevance to the CWC may cause irreparable adverse effects on our industry and economy." (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 40; CD/PV.625, 1992: 4 and Mashhadi 1992: 30)

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[109] Article VIII, paragraph 23 (b).

[110] For more on the Australia Group, which grew out of the concerns related to the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war, see the group's website at <http://www.australiagroup.net>.

The third main point made by Iranian negotiators related to article XI was that as a compensation for committing themselves to the intrusive verification system of the CWC and to the obligations of the convention in general, the states parties and especially those of the developing world should be granted aid and assistance in the field of chemical activities not prohibited under the treaty. Emphasizing the importance of the chemical sector for the economic, scientific, and technological progress of the developing world, Iranian officials contended that article XI should expressly guarantee the states parties' access to chemical compounds and technologies for peaceful purposes. (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 40 and CD/PV.625, 1992: 5)

Iran argued that ensured access to chemical materials and technologies was a major incentive for governments to accede to the CWC. Yet, when discussing the CWC in the Middle Eastern context, Iranian representatives asserted that the security dimension of the convention was what ultimately counted most. Therefore, in order to secure the universality of the CWC and to prepare suitable ground for Middle Eastern countries' treaty accession, the Iranians contended, the international community ought to address the security concerns of those states and to convince them that their participation in the CWC would not diminish their security. In the Islamic Republic's analysis, the biggest obstacle to Middle Eastern participation in the CWC was the "intrasingent aggressiveness of Israel." Iranian authorities argued that Israel possessed undeclared nuclear weapons and effectively had a nuclear monopoly in the region, in addition to which Israel was claimed by the Iranians to possess chemical and biological warfare capabilities as well. Unless Israel adhered to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, put its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the IAEA, and joined the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Iranians stressed, major Arab states would not join the CWC.[111] The Islamic Republic itself refrained from making a diplomatic linkage between chemical armaments and other WMD. Instead, Iranian authorities maintained that the CWC constituted a highly important milestone on the way towards a WMD-free Middle East.[112] Besides underlining the necessity of disarmament in the Middle East,

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[111] By 1990, the following six Middle Eastern countries were suspected or proven to have a chemical arms capability: Israel, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Iran (Hiltermann 2007: 228).

[112] The urgent need for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East – an objective that, together with the goal of a nuclear-free Middle East, had been expressly referred to in the UN Security Council resolution 687 of 3 April 1991 – was told by Iranian officials to stem from a number of factors. As one Iranian diplomat explained in October 1991: "[...] the nuclear-weapon capability of the Zionist regime, the widespread use of chemical weapons against my country, and the violations of the safeguards of the IAEA by a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT in our region, as illustrated by IAEA reports, are all matters of great concern to us. These make it all the more imperative to spare no effort to establish a zone free from

the representatives of the Islamic Republic also called for the creation of joint verification mechanisms in the field of WMD disarmament as a means to promote sub-regional security cooperation among the Persian Gulf countries.[113]

4.1.3 Towards the Iranian ratification of the CWC

4.1.3.1 Iran and the implementation of the CWC

The Chemical Weapons Convention, finalized at the CD in September 1992, was opened for signature in Paris in early 1993. Iran was among the original signatories by signing the convention on 13 January 1993. Although many of the points emphasized by Iranian negotiators during the CWC talks never made it to the final text of the convention, the representatives of the Islamic Republic eventually expressed their satisfaction with the treaty.[114] They regarded it as a model for other international arms control arrangements and as a culmination of their own hard diplomatic efforts in the area of chemical disarmament. In Iran's view, the existence of the CWC proved that the sufferings of the Iranian victims of Iraq's chemical warfare had also brought about something good. Paying their tributes to those victims, the authorities of the Islamic Republic pledged to remain diplomatically vigilant in order to ensure that the CWC will be effectively implemented. (Mashhadi 1993: 80; Velayati 1993: 1 and A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 53)

Accordingly, the Islamic Republic emphasized that the justified international enthusiasm for the new treaty should not blur the fact that the CWC still had a number of shortcomings which had to be rectified as soon as possible. Because of those alleged shortcomings – told by the Iranians to have resulted from the fact that the CD acts on the basis of consensus and from the "supremacy of political exigencies" that had coloured the CWC negotiation process – the convention was viewed in Tehran as a document which did not reflect the positions of all the members of the CD and which did not take into account many of the "legitimate and logical demands" of the

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nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East" (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 36–37).

[113] This paragraph draws upon CD/PV.582 (1991: 4); A/C.1/46/PV.42 (1991: 42); CD/PV.617 (1992: 49) and CD/PV.625 (1992: 5–6).

[114] Addressing the signing ceremony of the CWC in Paris on 13 January 1993, foreign minister Vilayati characterized the treaty as "an outstanding achievement" (Velayati 1993: 1). For other Iranian pronouncements praising the CWC, see A/C.1/47/PV.5 (1992: 49–50) and A/48/PV.14 (1993: 23).

developing world. For this reason, the Iranians opined, the execution of the CWC had to receive major diplomatic attention, and the diplomatic deliberations on unresolved questions regarding treaty implementation had to result in clear and unambiguous agreements leaving little room for differing interpretations.[115] (A/47/PV.5, 1992: 49; Velayati 1993: 1–2 and Nasseri 1995a: 2)

There were many worries Iranian authorities voiced about the implementation of the CWC. For example, the Iranians were concerned over the convention's financial implications. Echoing the sentiments of the developing world in general, the Islamic Republic feared that due to the costs of verification, the prices of chemical industry end products would rise and that the price hikes would ultimately be paid by developing countries, the importers of those products. Related to this point, the Iranians warned about the possibility that the increased chemical industry expenses could give birth to cartels or even set in motion a development towards chemical monopolies. The officials of the Islamic Republic regarded such scenarios as disastrous for the developing world and asked industrialized countries to ensure that the CWC would not subject developing countries to unreasonable financial pressures. In the same vein, they maintained that the states parties in possession of chemical armaments and weapons production facilities should be the ones covering all the costs related to the destruction as well as to the verification of the destruction of those armaments and facilities. Hence, the Iranians underlined, developing countries should not be burdened, for example, with the destruction of chemical weapons in the former Soviet bloc countries. (Mashhadi 1993: 82–85; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 12 and Nasseri 1995a: 2–3)

Article X of the CWC – which details measures to help states to protect themselves against chemical warfare – was another example of a treaty issue that was regularly raised by the officials of the Islamic Republic. As, in the Iranian view, a well-functioning assistance mechanism was a prerequisite for an effective treaty, Iranian representatives expressed their dissatisfaction with the text of paragraph 7(a) of article X which did not oblige the states parties to make financial contributions to the assistance fund mentioned in that article. According to the Iranians, binding financial

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[115] At the Paris signing ceremony of the CWC in January 1993, the signatories agreed to set up a Preparatory Commission (PrepCom) to prepare the creation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which, as stated in article VIII of the CWC, would be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the convention's provisions. Accordingly, before the OPCW – which is located in The

contributions would strengthen the credibility of the convention and thereby its role as a deterrent against the use or threat of use of chemical armaments. While speaking for mandatory contributions to the assistance fund, the officials of the Islamic Republic called for measures ensuring that voluntary contributions would flow into it. (*PrepCom statement* 1996: 3; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 13 and Mashhadi 1993: 85)

In the final analysis, however, the issues mentioned above were only of secondary importance to Iran. As Iranian officials had stated immediately after the completion of the CWC in 1992, there were three main questions the Islamic Republic wanted to raise in future discussions on the implementation of the CWC, all issues that the Iranians had already been underlining during the treaty negotiations: (1) the composition of the Executive Council of the OPCW; (2) the definition of the munitions, devices, and equipment regarded as chemical weapons under article II; and (3) the execution of article XI of the convention (A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 49–50).

In order to have a say in future implementation and development of the CWC, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to highlight the importance of the issue of the OPCW Executive Council's composition. Referring to the understanding reached at the very final stages of the CWC talks in September 1992, the Iranians argued that the "unbalanced and discriminatory" stipulations of article VIII had to be reviewed by the states parties. Iranian authorities repeated their argument according to which the division of the states parties into five geographical groupings – a division which, the Iranians claimed, did not reflect existing international circumstances but the realities of the bygone Cold War era – put the Asian states parties to a disadvantaged position because it was comparatively harder for them to become selected to serve in the council. (Ibid.: 52)

Moreover, Iranian officials strongly criticized paragraph 23 of article VIII which stated that four of the countries chosen to the Executive Council from the Asian grouping shall be states parties with the most significant national chemical industry in the region. In the Iranian opinion, the industrial criterion, applied in the context of other geographical groupings as well, created a discriminatory system of priviledged or "quasi-permanent" seats in the council. In addition, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that for many states parties the security dimension of the CWC outweighed the

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Hague – came into being at the entry into force of the CWC on 29 April 1997, the PrepCom provided the main forum for the states signatories to discuss matters related to the convention's implementation.

other aspects of the convention. For this reason, the countries that relied their security on the CWC should be entitled to ensured representation in the Executive Council.[116]

As far as the question of the definition of a chemical weapon under article II was concerned, Iran continued to underline the need for a clear understanding among the states parties. The principal reason for the Islamic Republic's diplomatic activism in the issue was the fear that a vague definition might broaden the scope of CWC inspections to areas regarded as unrelated to the convention, that is, to also cover information about the states parties' military establishments and conventional armaments. As stated by one Iranian arms control diplomat: "[…] with the definition as it stands, any country may challenge another member in order to acquire intelligence information. Any type of airplane, tank, artillery, even handgrenades, may become subject to challenge." What the weapons list presented by the Iranian official did not include was missiles. And yet, it was first and foremost the question of missiles that steered Iran's argumentation in this context, for the representatives of the Islamic Republic wanted to make sure that the stipulations of the CWC would not prevent Iran from pursuing its post-war missile program.[117] The Iranian position that article II of the convention should not cover delivery systems used for conventional purposes directly emanated from this premise.[118]

The fundamental demand of the Islamic Republic after the signing of the CWC was that all the states parties and all provisions of the convention should be treated equally. In no other connection did Iran's officials underline this principle as strongly as in debates on the implementation of article XI of the CWC. Between the Iranian signature and ratification of the CWC in 1993–1997, they constantly brought up the alleged problems with the execution of the treaty elements that were related to the states parties' economic and technological development and to their mutual chemical transfers for peaceful purposes.

Iran's critical argumentation on article XI centered on the export control measures applied by the members of the Australia Group. In the Islamic Republic's opinion, the control measures of the Australia Group were against the spirit and the letter of the

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[116] This paragraph draws upon A/C.1/47/PV.5 (1992: 82–83); *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 13) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[117] For Iran's missile policies after the Iran-Iraq war, see below section 5.3.2 pp. 458–470.

[118] This paragraph draws upon Nasseri (1995b: 239–240); *PrepCom statement* (1995a: 3) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

CWC and should therefore be lifted upon the entry into force of the CWC.[119] According to Iran's interpretation, the Australia Group had politically committed itself to do so during the CWC talks by declaring, in its statement of 7 August 1992, that the members of the group would review their control measures "with the aim of removing such measures" for the benefit of the CWC states parties acting in "full compliance" with their treaty obligations.[120] It was this commitment, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, that had made the final agreement on the completion of the CWC possible in the first place. More fundamentally, however, the Iranians claimed that the restrictions of the Australia Group were untenable because they directly fought against the stipulations of the CWC, especially the clauses c, d, and e of paragraph 2 of article XI.[121] (Nasseri 1995a: 3; Nasseri 1997: 2 and *PrepCom statement* 1995a: 2–3)

In addition to alluding to the political and legal commitments made by the members of the Australia Group to give up their export controls and to avoid hampering the economic, technological, and scientific development of the Third World, Iranian representatives argued that the birth of the CWC had made the group's activities obsolete.[122] Due to the comprehensive verification mechanism outlined in the

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[119] In his statement at the signing ceremony of the CWC in Paris in January 1993, foreign minister Vilayati called on the Australia Group to immediately lift, as a sign of diplomatic good will, its restrictions vis-à-vis the signatories of the convention (Velayati 1993: 2). Ultimately, however, Iran did not cling to this position but referred to the entry into force of the CWC as an acceptable deadline for the removal of the Australia Group's export controls. According to article XXI of the CWC, the convention enters into force "180 days after the date of the deposit of the 65th instrument of ratification, but in no case earlier than two years after its opening for signature." These requirements were met on 29 April 1997.

[120] This Australia Group statement became generally known as the "O'Sullivan statement," named after the Australian ambassador Paul O'Sullivan who made the statement on behalf of the Australia Group at the CD. For the details of the O'Sullivan statement, see CD/1164 (1992).

[121] Paragraph 2 (c) of the CWC reads as follows: "The states parties shall not maintain among themselves any restrictions, including those in any international agreements, incompatible with the obligations undertaken under this Convention, which would restrict or impede trade and the development and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical or other peaceful purposes." Paragraph 2 (d) in turn stipulates that the states parties "shall not use this Convention as grounds for applying any measures other than those provided for, or permitted, under this Convention nor use any other international agreement for pursuing an objective inconsistent with this Convention," whereas paragraph 2 (e) states that the states parties "shall undertake to review their existing national regulations in the field of trade in chemicals in order to render them consistent with the object and purpose of this Convention." In the opinion of the member states of the Australia Group, their export control restrictions were consistent with paragraph 1 (d) of article I of the CWC according to which the states parties shall never under any circumstances "assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a state party under this Convention." The differences of opinion between the Australia Group and Iran – as well as many other developing countries – regarding the interpretation of article XI ultimately derived from differing views about the essence of the CWC. Whereas industrialized countries essentially viewed the convention as a disarmament treaty, developing countries pointed out that the CWC combined the subject matters of disarmament and development. (Mashhadi 1999: 70–71 and Ronzitti 1998: 533–542)

[122] Iranian officials argued that, prior to the CWC, the activities of the Australia Group had made sense because they had focused on preventing hostile countries such as Iraq from obtaining substances required for the production of chemical armaments (Mashhadi 1995: 87 and Nasseri 1997: 3).

convention, the Iranians told, there was no need for export control measures outside the CWC framework to ensure that states give up the chemical weapons option.[123] This view reflected Iran's general position according to which technology transfer issues should be regulated only through multilaterally negotiated legal instruments and not through ad hoc diplomatic arrangements such as the Australia Group. (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 20 and A/C.1/51/PV.23, 1996: 12)

What the officials of the Islamic Republic found particularly annoying was that the "unjust, discriminatory, and politically motivated" restrictions of the Australia Group[124] had been directed towards countries – such as their own – that had actively contributed to the cause of chemical disarmament. In the Iranian view, it was totally unacceptable that, based on a purely subjective evaluation, the Australia Group defined which countries were viewed as CWC members of good standing. As a result, Iranian officials warned the international community that the export controls of the Australia Group not only hampered economic, technological, and scientific development in the Third World,[125] but also put the whole future of the CWC in jeopardy. In the first place, the Iranians stressed that the Australia Group restrictions discouraged developing countries to sign the convention because it was questionable that the CWC would help them in their development efforts. Secondly, the Islamic Republic warned that the arbitrary policies of the Australia Group reduced the willingness of some CWC signatories to ratify the convention, thus implying that its own ratification was linked with developments in the implementation of article XI. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 24 and Nasseri 1995b: 242)

Instead of sticking to their "unilateral and partial" interpretation of the CWC, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, the members of the Australia Group should enhance economic, scientific, and technological cooperation between developed and

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[123] As formulated by one Iranian arms control diplomat: "If we were to have a [disarmament] regime that is internationally accepted and then separate regimes that are provided for and presented by certain countries, then what is the use of the international regime at all (Nasseri 1995b: 262–263)?" Amid the international optimism generated by the breakup of the Cold War international system, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also argued that extra-CWC export controls were against the positive spirit of the emerging "new world order" as well as the goal of the total elimination of WMD (A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 15).

[124] For Iranian statements characterizing the Australia Group restrictions as unjust, discriminatory, and biased, see Velayati (1993: 2) and Mashhadi (1993: 83–84).

[125] Iranian representatives maintained that the Australia Group restrictions had retarded economic, technological, and scientific development, among others, in their own country. In an international seminar on the implementation of the CWC held in Tehran in April 1996, for example, a representative of Iran's chemical industry said that the export controls of the Australia Group had caused problems for the Islamic

developing countries in the field of chemical activities not prohibited under the convention. Article XI of the CWC was told by the Iranians to actually oblige advanced industrialized states to do so. Therefore, Iranian representatives continued, the developed world should accept binding commitments to transfer chemical materials and technology as well as relevant scientific information to developing countries. In addition, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, unhindered trade in chemical materials and technology should be accompanied with direct financial and technical assistance to those Third World members of the CWC that suffered from practical problems related to the convention's implementation. The Islamic Republic stressed that the CWC was more than a mere disarmament treaty. Having committed themselves to the ban on chemical weapons under article I and to the intrusive verification system of the CWC, the Iranians argued, the Third World members of the convention were entitled to receive economic, technological, and scientific benefits in the field of peaceful chemical activities in exchange for their treaty membership.[126]

In order to present a solution to the controversy over Australia Group export controls, the Islamic Republic proposed that the matter ought to be settled among the CWC states parties. Iran called for the establishment of an international arrangement under the convention to debate matters pertaining to the transfer of chemical materials, equipment, and scientific information, on the one hand, and the proliferation of chemical armaments, on the other. Even though initially seeing the arrangement as a substitute for the Australia Group, Iranian authorities subsequently argued that it should be regarded as a mechanism transforming the Australia Group into a truly representative body that would ensure that both the suppliers and the recipients of chemicals would have a voice in transfer matters concerning them.[127] According to Iranian officials, the arrangement proposed by the Islamic Republic should guarantee that all CWC states parties would have an equal access to chemical materials, relevant equipment, and

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Republic's chemical industry – especially in the production of pesticides and herbicides – and damaged the Iranian economy (Ali 1996: 43 and Feakes 2001: 47).

[126] This paragraph draws upon *PrepCom statement* (1996: 3); *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 21); Mashhadi (1993: 85) and A/C.1/52/PV.11 (1997: 21).

[127] One of the points regularly made by Iran's representatives in connection with their criticism of the Australia Group was that the group's decision-making was secretive. Iran's dissatisfaction with the alleged non-transparency of the Australia Group's activities led the officials of the Islamic Republic to make calls not only for transparency in armaments but for "transparency in export control regimes" as well. The Iranians also continued to refer to their government's oft-repeated position according to which international mechanisms promoting transparency in armaments – such the UN conventional arms register – should cover all categories of weapons, including chemical armaments and other WMD. (Nasseri 1995a: 3–4; CD/PV.683, 1994: 19 and A/C.1/52/PV.23, 1997: 6)

scientific information, even if the materials, equipment, and data in question could be labelled as dual-use, that is, being applicable to military purposes as well. If necessary, the Iranians added, CWC member states could also agree among themselves on specific export control measures. However, such restrictions would only apply to non-members of the CWC. (Nasseri 1997: 3; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 21 and A/C.1/49/PV.20, 1994: 11)

Demands for fairness and evenhandedness were also strongly present in Iranian statements on the state of chemical disarmament in the Middle Eastern context. Following the already familiar Iranian line of argumentation, the officials of the Islamic Republic referred to Israel's WMD arsenal – and to Israeli nuclear weapons, in particular – as well as to Israel's "militarism" as the reasons for Arab governments' reluctance to join the CWC. In the Iranian view, it was unacceptable that countries such as the United States allowed Israel to pursuit WMD programs and even supported them while making calls for broad Arab participation in the CWC. Such application of political double standard, the Iranians argued, fought against the goal of the universality of the CWC[128] and destroyed hopes for arms control in the Middle East as well as for a comprehensive peace in the region. In Iran's assessment, nuclear transparency on the part of Israel and that country's participation in the NPT were the only diplomatic ways out of the existing arms control deadlock in the Middle East. Only after such Israeli moves would the path towards a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East, the ultimate regional arms control objective officially envisioned by the Islamic Republic's representatives, be opened. (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 15 and A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28)

Given their gloomy analysis of the prospects for disarmament in the broad Middle Eastern arena, the Iranians focused on the Persian Gulf sub-region where the political and security circumstances were told by them to be more conducive to chemical disarmament, thanks first and foremost to the reduced threat of Iraq's chemical arsenal. In order to build up trust between Iran and GCC states and to further the Iranian-promoted goal of an indigenous security architecture in the Gulf, the authorities of the Islamic Republic made calls for joint regional measures for the implementation and

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[128] Iran's calls for the CWC's universality suggested that the Iranians understood the term 'universality' in two different ways. In the first place, it was used by Iranian authorities to mean the widest possible participation by states in the CWC. In the second place, the term was used to refer to the necessity that all major possessors of chemical weapons would commit themselves to the convention. (Cf. Mashhadi 1999: 69)

ratification of the CWC.[129] In addition, they put forth the idea of the gradual development of regional verification arrangements with the help of the UN.[130] Iranian representatives pointed out that while highly important in its own right, regional cooperation in chemical disarmament could also help Gulf countries to move towards the establishment of a WMDFZ in their region. Moreover, the Iranians emphasized that the Islamic Republic's diplomatic proposals were in accordance with the notion of a defensive security scheme presented by their government at the CD in September 1994[131] as well as with their country's general anti-WMD posture. (CD/PV.659, 1993: 8–9; Zarif 1996: 451 and A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28)

Iran strongly rejected the accusations claiming that, despite its calls for chemical disarmament, the Islamic Republic itself was working on a clandestine chemical weapons program.[132] For example, in October 1997, one month before Iran's ratification of the CWC, the deputy foreign minister of the Islamic Republic stressed that his country had "never manufactured, deployed or used" chemical or biological weapons. Referring to the position emphasized by the Islamic Republic during the Iran–Iraq war, Iranian representatives stated that their country's strong antipathy against chemical armaments and other WMD stemmed from religious and humanitarian considerations. Also, they warned that baseless and biased accusations against countries that strongly supported international arms control instruments could have an adverse effect on those states' willingness to ratify the CWC.[133] The Iranians had already made such a warning in October 1993, less than a year after Iranian signature of the CWC, when a Chinese vessel suspected of transporting prohibited chemical substances to Iran had been stopped in the Gulf by the U.S. Navy.[134] (Zarif 1997: 3; A/52/PV.6, 1997: 25 and A/48/PV.14, 1993: 23)

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[129] In this spirit – and with the help of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the PrepCom, the predecessor of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW – the Islamic Republic organized a regional seminar in Tehran in April 1996 dealing with the implementation of the CWC. The foreign participants of the seminar mainly came from Gulf and Central Asian countries. In the seminar, the Iranians underlined, among others, the importance of international support and assistance within the CWC framework to promote regional cooperation in chemical disarmament (*PrepCom statement* 1996: 1–2). For a summary of the April 1996 seminar in Tehran, see PC-XIV/B/WP.11 (1996).

[130] The Iranians added that their diplomatic suggestions were not exhaustive and welcomed any initiative made by Gulf Arab states to complement existing arms control treaties in the area of chemical weapons and other WMD (*The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* 1994: 269–270).

[131] See above section 3.7.1 p. 179.

[132] Islamic Iran's chemical weapons efforts will be discussed below in chapter 6.

[133] According to Iranian officials, the governments accusing the Islamic Republic of the development of chemical weapons were the same that had helped Iraq to arm itself with such weapons in the course of the Iran–Iraq war (Cordesman 1999a: 265).

[134] For the details of the October 1993 incident in the Gulf, see Ali (1996: 39–40).

4.1.3.2 The ratification decision of 1997

Its manifold reservations about the implementation of the CWC notwithstanding, Iran eventually ratified the convention in 1997. In the light of the emphasis put by the Islamic Republic on chemical disarmament since the early 1980s, the Iranian parliament's decision on 27 July 1997 to pass the ratification bill presented by the foreign ministry[135] constituted a logical step in Islamic Iran's arms control efforts. Although some observers at the time had doubts about the Islamic Republic's readiness to ratify the CWC,[136] and although Iranian officials themselves intentionally fuelled such suspicions in order to strengthen their hand in diplomatic talks on the convention's execution,[137] Iran's CWC ratification seems to have never been under a serious threat.

Still, the debate that took place within the Islamic Republic on the ratification of the CWC illustrated that the subject of chemical weapons continued to arouse strong feelings among the country's political and military leadership.[138] The Iranian elite members who opposed the ratification – a group consisting most notably of the representatives of Iran's armed forces, especially the IRGC, as well as of ideological hardliners with an antagonistic attitude towards any sort of cooperation with the West – viewed the CWC as a diplomatic arrangement that reduced the Islamic Republic's freedom of choice in security policy. They asked why Iran should tie its hands by giving up the chemical weapons option at a time when it was surrounded by countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, and India that were pursuing WMD programs at the fullest possible speed. The elite opponents of the CWC also referred to what they saw as Israel's development of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons without any international interference as well as to the dangers posed by WMD-equipped American forces

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[135] The Guardian Council – the Iranian state body composed of twelve legal experts and responsible for determining whether the laws passed by the Majlis are compatible with Islamic law and with the Islamic Republic's constitution – approved the CWC ratification bill three days later, on 30 July 1997.

[136] For an expert view from 1997 predicting that the Islamic Republic would not ratify the convention as long as the Arab governments linking their CWC participation with Israel's accession to the NPT would stay outside the treaty, see Chubin (1997b: 35).

[137] For Iranian pronouncements playing with the 'ratification card' – that is, implying that a positive ratification decision by the Majlis was far from being in the lap of the gods –, see Nasseri (1995a: 2 and 1997: 5).

[138] Iranian officials subsequently tried to downplay the role of such differences of opinion by stating, among others, that there was "all but a unanimous consensus" among the Islamic Republic's decision-makers on the importance of the CWC. Simultaneously, however, the Iranians did also maintain that "in democratic countries such as Iran," politicians and military people were allowed to freely express their opinions. (Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 517 and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002)

stationed in the Persian Gulf and to the massive WMD arsenals of the United States and Russia.[139]

Furthermore, the opponents of the ratification pointed to the CWC ratification process in the United States and argued that the convention only served the interests of the major powers. The national exemptions formulated to the application of the CWC by U.S. lawmakers were said to illustrate how vulnerable the convention was to major power manipulation.[140] Finally, some members of the Islamic Republic's political and military establishment were sceptical about the CWC's efficiency in times of crisis. They stressed that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 had neither protected Iranians from Iraq's chemical attacks nor prompted international measures to stop Iraq's chemical crimes. If the Geneva protocol had been of no practical use, the Iranian critics asked, why should the Islamic Republic now put its faith in the CWC?[141]

The Iranian elite members who supported Iran's ratification of the CWC likewise based their arguments first and foremost on the analysis of the convention's security implications. Yet in their view, Iran, the latest victim of chemical weapons use, would clearly benefit from a multilateral disarmament treaty banning chemical armaments. Iranian supporters of the CWC pointed out that, as a disarmament arrangement, the convention would provide absolute security advantages for their country because it aimed at totally eliminating a highly dangerous class of weaponry. They further noted that article X of the CWC entitled Iran to receive assistance and protection against chemical weapons in crisis situations and that the treaty obliged the states parties to promptly react to any breaches of its stipulations. The losses of human lives as well as the chronical illnesses, genetic disorders, and emotional and psychological wounds that had resulted from Iraq's chemical warfare during the "imposed war" – together with the fact that Iran still lived under the threat of chemical weapons – were underlined by the CWC supporters to be good reasons for their country to rely on the CWC.[142]

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[139] Author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002; author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Byman et al. (2001: 97).

[140] The American national exemptions included a provision that allowed the country's president to refuse an on-site inspection if it was regarded as a threat to national security, a provision specifying that no samples collected in the course of a CWC inspection were allowed to be analyzed outside the U.S. territory, and finally, a provision that narrowed the number of industry facilities that were required to declare mixtures or solutions that contained scheduled chemicals posing a proliferation risk. The United States ratified the CWC on 25 April 1997, four days before the treaty's entry into force. (Smithson 2001: 25)

[141] Author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002, and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[142] Ibid. Also see Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 517); Zarif (2001: 1) and Alborzi (2001: 1).

More broadly, the Iranian elite members pushing for the CWC's ratification declared that there was no legitimate room for chemical weapons or other WMD in the Islamic Republic's military doctrine. In the first place, WMD were inhumane and against the laws of Islam and hence against the religious convictions of the Iranian people. In the second place, Iranian supporters of the CWC maintained, WMD would not enhance or guarantee Iran's national security. On the contrary, by acquiring WMD Iran would subject itself to a number of major risks. Militarily, the Islamic Republic would become vulnerable to attacks by foreign powers wanting to prevent Iran from developing WMD, and in crisis situations, to WMD attacks by military forces situated in Iran's immediate neighbourhood. Iranian elite spokesmen for the CWC claimed that a national WMD capability would constitute a danger from an economic and societal perspective as well. In addition to WMD projects' dramatic national opportunity costs, by committing itself to WMD programs, the Islamic Republic would face various kinds of sanctions, both economic and political, enforced by the international community.[143]

The non-military aspects of the CWC played another important – albeit a secondary – role in the argumentation of those Iranian elite members who emphasized the benefits of the chemical treaty. By committing itself to the CWC, they maintained, the Islamic Republic would gain, theoretically at least, an access to unhindered trade in chemical materials and technology as well as to international economic, technological, and scientific cooperation in the field of peaceful chemical activities. By remaining outside the CWC framework, Iranian elite supporters of the CWC argued, their country would be worse off because it would lose all the rights granted to the states parties by the convention as well as the legal basis for its demands in matters pertaining to the treaty's article XI. The Iranian ratification of the CWC was also told to give a strong signal to foreign governments that the Islamic Republic was not working on a chemical weapons program and thereby help Iran to alter its international reputation as a potential proliferator.[144]

Ultimately, the Supreme National Security Council – a key Iranian decision-making body in foreign and security affairs – overruled the views of those criticizing Iran's ratification of the CWC and paved the way for the Majlis and Guardian Council decisions of July 1997 endorsing the ratification. On 3 November 1997, almost five

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[143] Author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002, and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.
[144] Ibid. Also see Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 521–522); Mashhadi (1999: 69–71) and Alborzi (1999: 3).

years after its signature of the CWC, the Islamic Republic deposited its CWC ratification instrument with the secretary-general of the UN, the convention's depositary.

Why did it, then, take nearly five years for Iran to ratify the CWC? Iranian officials referred to domestic bureaucratic workload, to their government's dissatisfaction with the implementation of the CWC, as well as to the need to convince various segments of the Islamic Republic's political and military establishment that the treaty would serve Iran's national interests as the main factors explaining the delay between Iran's signature and ratification of the CWC.[145] In addition, Iran was told to have waited for U.S. and Russian ratifications before going ahead with its own national process. According to Iranian representatives, the ratification of the CWC by the former Cold War adversaries was an absolute necessity, for the non-participation of the two major possessors of chemical armaments would not only have had negative budgetary, administrative, and technical implications for the practical running of the CWC arrangement, but, more importantly, it would have also severely eroded the authority, effectiveness, and universality of the convention. Had the Americans and the Russians not ratified the CWC, Iranian officials pointed out, the treaty would have effectively transformed from a disarmament agreement into a non-proliferation treaty. Such a development, the Iranians stressed, would have been totally unacceptable because it would have put the states parties in an unequal position and dramatically diminished the security value of the CWC.[146] (CD/PV.743, 1996: 21; A/51/PV.32, 1996: 24 and *PrepCom statement* 1996: 1)

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[145] Author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, The Hague, 8 July 2002, and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[146] In 1996, the Islamic Republic had proposed that the signatories of the CWC should organize a high-level conference to deliberate on the issue of U.S. and Russian ratification of the treaty (*Chemical Weapons Convention Bulletin*, September 1996). The main rationale for the Iranian proposal was to create diplomatic pressure on the Americans and the Russians to ratify the CWC. It is worth noting here that Russia's initial position that it was not able to ratify the CWC because of the high financial costs related to the implementation of the treaty was met with some sympathy in the Islamic Republic. Iranian authorities were of the opinion that it was the duty of advanced industrialized countries – and the United States, in particular – to help Russia to destroy its huge stockpiles of chemical weapons and hence contribute to Russian ratification of the CWC. As put by the Iranian representative addressing the first CWC Conference of the States Parties – the main organ of the OPCW which oversees the implementation of the convention and is composed of all member states – in The Hague on 8 May 1997: "As for Russia, whose participation is necessary to make the Convention meaningful, a will to address her concerns remains absent. Huge sums of money has been saved by NATO following the end of the Cold War. Hence, major countries within NATO should be willing and prepared to contribute in meeting the costs of chemical weapons destruction in Russia" (Nasseri 1997: 2). In the end, on 31 October 1997, the Russian Duma approved, after extensive debate, the ratification of the CWC. Russia deposited its CWC ratification instrument with the UN secretary-general on 5 November 1997, two days after the Iranian

It is likely that the delay in the Islamic Republic's ratification decision resulted before all else from diplomatic manoeuvring. By trying to give the impression that their country's ratification depended on other states' policies vis-à-vis the treaty, Iranian representatives hoped to advance their interests in intra-CWC debates. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, such interests were only secondary to the overarching objective which had occupied Islamic Iran's arms control officials for years: to have an international convention banning chemical weapons in place. The conclusion that the delay in Iran's CWC ratification amounted to diplomatic politicking is supported, among others, by the fact that while playing with the ratification card in the years after their country's signature of the CWC, Iranian authorities simultaneously had expressed concern over the slow pace of CWC ratifications in general[147] as well as steadily built up the institutional and legislative infrastructure needed for the convention's national execution.

In 1995, for example, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had informed the PrepCom that their country had finished preparations for the establishment of a national authority responsible for overseeing the implementation of the CWC in Iran.[148] They had also alluded to CWC-related consultations within the Iranian bureaucracy of which the inter-agency seminar on national implementation of the treaty held in Tehran in December 1995 had been given as a prime example. In November 1995, the Islamic Republic had handed over a Persian translation of the CWC to the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the PrepCom, in addition to which the Iranians had supposedly carried out a CWC trial inspection at a petrochemical plant in Shiraz that year. Furthermore, at the time, the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry had actively been preparing the CWC ratification bill for the foreign affairs committee of the Majlis. (C-IV/NAT.11, 1999: 1 and *PrepCom statement* 1995b: 2)

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deposition. For a comprehensive list of the states parties and the signatory states to the CWC, see <http://www.opcw.org/html/db/members_frameset.html>.

[147] Take, for example, the following Iranian pronouncement from August 1993 which can be read both as a concealed threat and as an expression of concern: "There is already growing concern [...] that the enthusiasm of many countries to sign the Convention will give way to reluctance or, at least, indifference when the time for ratification comes [...]. The small number of ratifications so far in comparison with the number of signatories is a vivid signal." (CD/PV.659, 1993: 7)

[148] Officially, the Iranian national authority started its activities after Iran's CWC ratification in 1997. It reports directly to the Islamic Republic's Supreme National Security Council. According to Iranian representatives, the purpose of the direct link established between the National Authority and the SNSC was to make sure that the National Authority had the "highest authority" in conducting its supervisory tasks. The secretariat of the National Authority is based in – and the international relations of the National Authority, such as its contacts with the OPCW, are managed through – the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry. (C-IV/NAT.11, 1999: 1)

If, thus, the more or less concealed threats made by Iran before the summer of 1997 to refrain from ratifying the CWC is ultimately interpreted as diplomatic manoeuvring, a similar conclusion can drawn from the Majlis declaration which was attached to Iran's CWC ratification instrument and which listed the circumstances under which the Islamic Republic would reserve itself the right to withdraw from the convention.[149] According to the Majlis declaration, steps aimed at Iranian withdrawal would be put in motion if: (1) the principle of equal treatment of all states parties in the implementation of all relevant provisions of the convention would be violated; (2) confidential information provided to the OPCW would be disclosed contrary to the provisions of the CWC; and (3) restrictions incompatible with the obligations under the convention would be imposed upon the states parties (*OPCW: The Legal Texts* 1999: 112).[150]

The conditions spelled out by the Majlis indicated, for their part, that the existence of the CWC and the decreased threat of Iraq made it possible for Iranian authorities – who had argued, it should be reminded, during the CWC negotiations that no state party should be allowed to withdraw its treaty membership – to place diplomatic emphasis on issues that pertained to the economic and technological aspects of the CWC.[151] Still, it is difficult to imagine that the Islamic Republic would have stepped out of the CWC merely because of its long-lived dissatisfaction with the way in which the economic and technological dimensions of the convention had been downplayed by advanced

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[149] According to article XVI of the CWC, each member state has the right to withdraw from the convention if it decides that "extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Convention," have put the supreme interests of the state party in jeopardy. The states parties are obliged to give notice of their withdrawal 90 days in advance to all other member states, to the OPCW Executive Council, to the secretary-general of the UN, the depositary, as well as to the UN Security Council. Such notice is expected to include a statement of the "extraordinary events" that have jeopardized the vital interests of the withdrawing country. It should be noted that shortly before the Majlis ratification of the CWC, the Islamic Republic had hinted at the possibility of withdrawing from the convention should the dispute over Australia Group export controls not be satisfactorily resolved in the immediate future (Nasseri 1997: 3).

[150] The declaration of the Iranian parliament obliged the Islamic Republic's foreign ministry to monitor international developments in the execution of the CWC and to report any violation of the three points listed by the Majlis to the SNSC. As stated in the Majlis declaration, the final decision on Iran's withdrawal from the CWC would be made by the SNSC upon the recommendation of Iran's president-led cabinet. The Islamic Republic's foreign ministry has performed the monitoring task assigned to it by the Majlis, among others, by instructing Iran's CWC National Authority to systematically collect information about the negative answers given by chemical suppliers to Iran's trade requests and about the restrictions applied by exporting states in the area of chemical materials and technology. (*OPCW: The Legal Texts* 1999: 112; Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 521 and C-IV/NAT.11, 1999: 6)

[151] Beside listing the conditions under which Iran would reserve itself the right to withdraw from the CWC, the Majlis declaration repeated the Islamic Republic's overall views on the implementation of the CWC. For example, it reiterated the general Iranian demand that all the convention's provisions had to be fully, unconditionally, and indiscriminately implemented. Moreover, the Majlis declaration explicated Iran's position on article XI as well as stated that Iran, on the basis of Islamic principles and beliefs, "considers chemical weapons inhuman and has consistently been on the vanguard of the international efforts to abolish these weapons and prevent their use." (*OPCW: The Legal Texts* 1999: 111–112)

industrialized states. Should Islamic Iran ever decide to withdraw from the convention, a scenario that cannot be ruled out, such a decision would most likely be based on a widely shared perception within the Iranian elite that the CWC no longer contributes to the Islamic Republic's security.

4.1.4 Iran's chemical diplomacy after the CWC ratification

4.1.4.1 The Islamic Republic's response to accusations of chemical weapons development

Iran's deposition of its CWC ratification instrument in November 1997 took place at a time when the domestic political landscape in the Islamic Republic was undergoing a significant change. As the ramifications of the rise of reformist Iranian elite forces – led by the newly-elected president Muhammad Khatami – extended not only to Iran's domestic politics but to its foreign policy as well, Iranian arms control operations were internationally regarded as important indicators of whether the Islamic Republic under president Khatami would distance itself from what were seen as worrisome elements of its foreign and security policy.[152] Therefore, after the Khatami administration had deposited Iran's CWC ratification instrument and thereby formally finalized Iran's participation in the treaty,[153] international observers began to wait for the content of Iranian national declarations which Iran, as a CWC state party, was obliged to submit to the OPCW within two months after the deposition of its ratification instrument.[154]

The contents of Iran's initial declarations remained unknown until November 1998, when Iranian authorities, in connection with the sixth Conference of the States Parties to

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[152] The European Union, for example, closely monitored the political developments in Iran to see whether the emergence of reformist voices in that country's political elite would bring about changes in the Islamic Republic's arms policies and its arms control diplomacy, especially in the area of WMD (author's interview with an EU member state arms control official who wishes to remain unidentified, 17 December 1999).

[153] The fact that it was the newly formed administration of president Khatami that deposited Iran's ratification instrument with the UN secretary-general did not convey a specific political message as far as the Islamic Republic's diplomatic course was concerned, for the delay between Iran's ratification of the CWC in July 1997 and the deposition of the ratification instrument in November 1997 was caused by domestic protocol-related considerations that resulted from the changes in Iran's executive branch following the May 1997 presidential elections (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

[154] This obligation to provide the OPCW with so-called initial declarations is detailed in article III of the CWC. In essence, article III obliges the states parties to declare what chemical capabilities they currently have or have possessed in the past. In addition, the states parties are obliged to provide a general plan regarding the destruction of such capabilities.

the CWC, finally submitted their country's declaration documents to the OPCW. In order to dampen down the criticism that the delay in Iran's submission of national declarations constituted a technical non-compliance with the CWC,[155] the officials of the Islamic Republic gave a number of reasons for the deferral. According to standard Iranian explanation, the Islamic Republic simply did not have enough bureaucratic resources to collect and process all the declaration information in time.[156] However, Iran's diplomatic pronouncements also suggested that the officials of the Islamic Republic used the declarations issue as a tool to stress their dissatisfaction with a number of CWC-related issues, such as the ratification exemptions adopted by the United States and the implementation of article XI of the convention.[157] Moreover, given the conflicting views within Iran's political elite about the value of the country's CWC membership, it may have been that there were differences of view among Iranian authorities over the national declarations' content.

In the end, and to the surprise of many observers, Iran disclosed in its CWC declarations, handed to the OPCW in November 1998, that it had pursued a chemical weapons program during the "last years" of the Iran–Iraq war. According to Iranian authorities, their country had possessed two chemical weapons production facilities which had provided Iranian armed forces with a "strictly limited" chemical capability.[158] The officials of the Islamic Republic explained the purpose of the Iranian program by stressing that in the wake of Iraq's readiness, during the war, to escalate its chemical warfare to major Iranian population centers, and in the light of the war-time disinterest of the international community – including that of the UN and the world organization's Security Council, in particular – in stopping Iraq's chemical crimes, Iran's Supreme Defence Council, the predecessor of the Supreme National Security

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[155] Technical non-compliance with the CWC refers to a situation where a member state demonstrates a commitment to the fundamental objectives of the convention but fails to implement its treaty obligations to the letter. On the other hand, a state party is viewed as being in substantive non-compliance with the CWC if it seeks to deceive the treaty while simultaneously alluding to its technical compliance with the convention. (Sands and Pate 2001: 19)

[156] For Iranian statements making this point, see Alborzi (1998: 1) and C-IV/NAT.11 (1999: 4). Along with the bureaucratic resources explanation, Iranian officials often noted that the deadline for the national declarations, as set out in the CWC, was simply too tight. As underlined by one Iranian representative: "The fact that only 36% of states parties could fulfill this part of their obligation [...] is a clear indication that the timelines set out in the CWC were not feasible" (C-IV/NAT.11 1999: 4).

[157] See A/C.1/53/PV.9 (1998: 25) and Alborzi (1998: 1–2).

[158] Iran reportedly informed the OPCW that its war-time program had concerned the production of one single chemical agent, that is, mustard gas. The Iranian declarations, which are classified, supposedly also included information about the Islamic Republic's weapons storage and destruction facilities as well as about Iranian chemical industry facilities. (Hiltermann 2004: 164; author's interviews with Iranian arms

Council, had ultimately had no other choice than to authorize the development of a national chemical weapons capability.[159] (Alborzi 1998: 2 and Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 517–519)

However, Iranian authorities also stressed that although prime minister Musavi had informed the world about Iran's chemical weapons capability already back in 1986,[160] the Islamic Republic had never ended up actually using chemical armaments. While, over the war years, Iranian representatives had routinely alluded to religious and humanitarian considerations as the reason for Iran's disdain of chemical weapons, they subsequently introduced a somewhat more varied explanation for their country's non-use of such armaments. Above all, the fact that Iran's chemical arsenal had been quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to that of Iraq was told by the Iranians to have additionally discouraged their country from resorting to chemical warfare. Some Iranian officials suggested that, before all else, it had in fact been this factor – the fear of the conflict's escalation into an all-out chemical warfare in which Iran would have been on the receiving end of most of the chemical attacks – and not the Iranian leaders' religious and moral beliefs that had explained the Islamic Republic's non-use of chemical armaments during the "imposed war."[161]

Given that Iran had never used chemical armaments, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, it had not been difficult for their country to give up its chemical weapons option soon after the Iran–Iraq war had ended. According to Iran's initial declarations to the OPCW, the Islamic Republic had unilaterally terminated its chemical weapons program following the war and decided not to seek or produce chemical armaments in the future. Instead, Iran had made the decision – which, the Iranians claimed, had steered the diplomacy of the Islamic Republic ever since – to put its faith in an international legal ban on chemical weapons. Although Iranian authorities did not,

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control officials [C] and [D] who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Sands and Pate 2001: 19)

[159] As formulated by two Iranian arms control officials in 1999: "Facing such an extensive use of chemical weapons [by Iraq] against soldiers and civilians alike coupled with the acquiescence and even open collaboration of major global players with the culprit, Iran concluded that no other alternative was left but to resort to the only remaining means of deterrence [...]" (Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 518).

[160] See above section 4.1.1.2 p. 229.

[161] This paragraph draws upon Alborzi (1998: 2); Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 519) and author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002. It should be noted that according to Moin (1999: 268–269), the IRGC had proposed – soon after the appointment of Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani as the acting commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces in June 1988 – that the Islamic Republic should use its own chemical weapons in response to Iraq's chemical warfare. Fearing that Iranian chemical strikes would invite a crushing Iraqi response, however, Rafsanjani had convinced Ayatollah Khomeini of the wisdom of not acting upon the IRGC's advice.

publicly at least, elaborate on when, where, and how they had destroyed the chemical weapons developed in the war period, they did officially declare to the OPCW, in November 1998, that Iran no longer was in possession of chemical armaments. (Alborzi 1998: 2; Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 519 and Mills 2002)

In February 1999, the OPCW completed its first inspection mission to Iran. The purpose of the inspection was to examine the chemical sites and facilities listed in Iran's initial declarations as well as to check the accuracy of the declaration information provided by the Islamic Republic. As a result of the visit, the OPCW gave Iran a clean record and expressed its satisfaction with Iranian authorities' cooperation during the inspection. OPCW officials were particularly happy about the fact that Iran had destroyed its declared chemical weapons production facilities in the presence of the inspectors, even though under article V of the CWC, Iran would have had ten years after the convention's entry into force to destroy the facilities. The purpose of Iran's gesture of diplomatic good will, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, was to underscore their country's commitment to the CWC as well as to show, as put by one Iranian representative, that "we try to be more open than others." Subsequent OPCW inspections in Iran[162] also provided favourable outcomes for the Iranians.[163]

Despite the fact that the OPCW deemed the Islamic Republic to be in full compliance with the CWC,[164] Iran was still being suspected by some governments of producing and stockpiling chemical armaments.[165] Therefore, after Iran's ratification of the CWC in July 1997, the officials of the Islamic Republic were forced to continue to defend their country against such suspicions. The Iranians categorically rejected the WMD accusations made particularly by the United States and Israel and maintained that their

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[162] Between 1999–2003, the OPCW conducted altogether 11 routine inspections in Iran (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 73).

[163] This paragraph draws upon Mills (2002); Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 519) and author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[164] For an OPCW pronouncement to this effect, see, for example, the statement of 8 December 2000 made by José Maurício Bustani, the director-general of the organization. In his statement, Bustani noted that the OPCW had "no reason whatsoever to question Iran's full compliance with the CWC" and pointed out that all the organization's verification activities in Iran had been conducted "in an atmosphere of openness and transparency, and with the full cooperation of the Iranian government" (Bustani 2000). Bustani's December 2000 statement was a response to an official Iranian complaint about a November 2000 article published in the OPCW's official journal which had been written by an Israeli scholar and which had implied that the Islamic Republic continued to possess chemical armaments and, therefore, was in substantive non-compliance with the CWC.

[165] Partly at least, these suspicions were fuelled by Iran's unwillingness to elaborate on what had happened to the chemical weapons in its possession during the war years.

country posed no threat to international or regional security.[166] The Islamic Republic's active diplomacy in the area of chemical disarmament, its declaration of past possession of chemical armaments, together with its readiness to destroy its chemical weapons production facilities far before the CWC deadline and in the presence of OPCW inspectors, were referred to by Iranian authorities as evidence of their country's impeccable behaviour and of its peaceful intentions.[167] Iranian representatives also stressed that the existence of differing views within Iran's leadership on foreign and security policy issues should not be misconstrued to mean that the Islamic Republic's arms control operations lacked authority or broad national support.[168]

Although the challenge inspections mentioned in article IX of the CWC provided the states parties with a mechanism to resolve questions about non-compliance, no member state had hitherto made use of them.[169] In the Iranian opinion, this fact had indicated, for its part, that those who accused the Islamic Republic of WMD development had nothing to base their claims on. Moreover, Iranian authorities stressed that should a CWC member state ultimately decide to launch a challenge inspection against their country, they would have nothing to hide. To the contrary, they would warmly welcome OPCW inspectors to their country. Yet, in the Iranian officials' analysis, it was highly unlikely that a challenge inspection against Iran would be initiated in the first place because such an inspection would deprive countries like the United States and Israel of the chance to make "baseless and politically motivated allegations" against the Islamic Republic.[170]

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[166] See *BBC* (30 December 1998) and *IRNA* (22 March 2000 and 17 December 2001). That Iranian representatives had to constantly deny the charges that their country pursued WMD possibly explained the lapsus made by the Iranian foreign ministry's spokesman who reportedly stated in September 2001, nearly three years after Iran's initial CWC declarations, that his country had "never been after acquiring WMD" (*IRNA*, 10 September 2001).

[167] Alborzi (1998: 2); Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 520) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[168] Author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002. Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 515), two functionaries of the Iranian foreign ministry, commented the Islamic Republic's intra-elite debates as follows: "Transparency and tolerance for diversity of views even on subjects as complicated as non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction is a necessity [...]; a necessity that is easily appreciated for Western democracies, but often misunderstood and misinterpreted in the West when applied by Third World democracies such as Iran."

[169] Paragraph 8 of article IX of the CWC states that each member state "has the right to request an on-site challenge inspection of any facility or location in the territory or in any other place under the jurisdiction or control of any other State Party for the sole purpose of clarifying and resolving any questions concerning possible non-compliance with the provisions of this Convention."

[170] Author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002. Sands and Pate (2001: 20) argue that the reluctance of CWC states parties to initiate a challenge inspection against Iran may have arisen from the concern that the Iranians would launch a retaliatory inspection. Furthermore, the United States and other countries suspecting the Islamic Republic of WMD development may have wanted to forgo the inspection option because they did not want to disclose sensitive intelligence they had on Iran. Smithson (2001: 28), in turn, suggests that there had been

Iranian representatives further noted that although their government supported challenge inspections, the challenge mechanism should be used with utmost diplomatic care, that is, only when all other means provided by the CWC to alleviate non-compliance concerns had been utilized and only in the context of cases that posed a major threat to the convention's objectives. In this respect, Iran's position was similar to that of CWC states parties such as Russia, China, and India.[171] (Sands and Pate 2001: 18–19)

Under the presidency of Muhammad Khatami, the Iranian government continued to try to convince foreign skeptics of the Islamic Republic's strict commitment to its arms control obligations by pointing to the ideological premises that allegedly steered Islamic Iran's arms control operations. In addition to repeating the core Iranian argument that chemical weapons and other WMD were immoral and illegal under Islamic law, the representatives of the Islamic Republic made allusions to the notion of "global security networking" which was advertised by them as the security interpretation of the concept of "dialogue among civilizations," the Khatami administration's ideological catchphrase in the realm of foreign policy.[172] According to Iranian officials, global security networking was a principle of diplomatic cooperation that would enhance the security of all nations and would leave no room for WMD or for "illusory theories of deterrence" emphasizing the importance of such armaments. Thus, in order to pave the way for global security networking and for a new, cooperative paradigm of international relations, the representatives of the Khatami administration stressed, the Islamic Republic had adopted the universal elimination of all kinds of WMD as a fundamental diplomatic objective. (CD/PV.812, 1999: 3 and A/54/PV.12, 1999: 13)

4.1.4.2 Chemical arms control in the Middle East

In the Iranian opinion, the WMD accusations levelled against the Islamic Republic by the United States and other Western governments were part of a selective and

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no challenge inspections against countries suspected of CWC non-compliance mainly because other governments were waiting for the United States to confront and punish the possible cheaters.

[171] Under article IX of the CWC, the states parties are advised to take advantage of certain consultative procedures before resorting to challenge inspections, the ultimate means offered by the treaty to deal with compliance concerns. As far as the case of Iran was concerned, at least the United States and Britain followed such procedures by bilaterally approaching the Khatami government and making requests for information about Iranian chemical activities, among others, in the development of chemical defences. Iran's diplomatic answers – provided in the course of 2001–2002 – to the U.S. and British queries were considered insufficient by both governments. (Author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials [C] and [D] who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002)

[172] See above section 3.8.1 pp. 191–193.

discriminatory policy that had negative implications for arms control in the Middle East. The Khatami administration voiced its concern over the unpopularity of the CWC among the regional governments and criticized Western powers for not pressuring Israel to give up its nuclear weapons arsenal – thereby sympathizing with the Arab position that made a strong linkage between chemical and nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.[173] Yet, under Khatami, Iran seemed to distance itself more clearly than before from the Arab linkage stance, and instead of submitting to the deadlock in the Arab–Israeli arms control debate, the Khatami administration called for international measures that would tackle the question of WMD in the Middle East in a comprehensive manner but in a way that would still divide the open issues into individual categories.[174] Such an approach, Iranian officials stressed, would be in accordance with global security networking which underscored the importance of comprehensive WMD disarmament but did not rule out the adoption of partial measures to that end (Alborzi 1999: 2).

The Khatami administration's references to global security networking were not the only new nuance in the Islamic Republic's argumentation on chemical disarmament in the Middle East. For example, the Iranian suggestion that major WMD states should give security guarantees to those Middle Eastern countries whose threat perceptions kept them from joining the CWC[175] – that is, to reluctant Arab states – implied that the Iranians believed there to be a way to diplomatically circumvent the existing Arab-Israeli arms control standoff. Still, for the most part, Iran's arms control statements continued to refer to Israeli steps in the nuclear field as the starting point for comprehensive chemical disarmament in the Middle East. The officials of the Islamic Republic continued to speak for international measures that would isolate Israel and keep it under constant pressure until it agreed to join the NPT and to put an end to its WMD programs.[176] Only through such Israeli measures, Iranian officials asserted, would the establishment of a Middle Eastern WMDFZ, the Khatami administration's

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[173] For Iranian pronouncements denouncing what the Islamic Republic viewed as the application of political double standard in the Middle East by Western governments and the United States, in particular, see Khareghani (2000: 3) and *IRNA* (10 September 2000).

[174] In the words of the Iranian representative addressing the fourth Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in June 1999: "Instead of creating strict linkage [between chemical and nuclear disarmament], we should embark upon serious political initiatives along parallel tracks in dealing with various WMD in a coherent manner based on their own individual merits" (Alborzi 1999: 2).

[175] For this Iranian proposal, see (ibid.: 3).

[176] See Alborzi (1998: 2) and Khareghani (2000: 3).

ultimate declared disarmament objective in the region, become an achievable arrangement.[177]

As far as the Islamic Republic's statements on the Persian Gulf sub-region were concerned, they made relatively few allusions to chemical disarmament. Certainly the fact that all GCC states had ratified the CWC between February 1995 and November 2000 had made chemical disarmament in the Iran–GCC context a less urgent issue for the Iranians.[178] Resultantly, the representatives of the Khatami government – who were busy trying to convince the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms of the benefits resulting from CBM between Iran and the GCC states and who viewed such confidence-building efforts as a springboard for more comprehensive security cooperation – focused their argumentation on more ambitious ideas, such as the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Gulf or the creation of an indigenous security system in the region.[179]

However, there were two principal security issues in the Gulf that continued to seriously trouble Iranian authorities. The first was the foreign military presence in the region. In particular, the military activities of the U.S. forces were the target of Iran's regular condemnations (Chubin and Green 1998: 162). For example, Iranian military commanders alleged that the ships of the U.S. Fifth Fleet in the Gulf were equipped with WMD – including chemical weapons – and portrayed those U.S. weapons as a major threat to regional security as well as to the marine environment in the Gulf (Eisenstadt 1998a: 75). Not unexpectedly, the WMD ambitions of Saddam Hussein's Iraq constituted the second major Gulf security issue that worried Iranian decision-makers. In spite of the post-Gulf conflict efforts by UNSCOM to disarm Iraq, the Iranians believed that the Iraqis had managed to continue their WMD programs in defiance of relevant UN resolutions.

Especially after August 1998, when Iraq had declared that it would suspend cooperation with UNSCOM and not allow the continuation of UN arms inspections, the threat posed by Iraq's WMD again became a central factor in Iran's arms control calculations. In February 1998, during the initial stage of the diplomatic crisis between

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[177] President Khatami himself referred to the objectives of a WMDFZ in the Middle East and a WMD-free world, among others, in his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1998 (A/53/PV.8, 1998: 7).

[178] Oman was the first GCC country to ratify the CWC on 8 February 1995. Saudi Arabia ratified the convention on 9 August 1996, Bahrain on 28 April 1997, Kuwait on 28 May 1997, Qatar on 3 September 1997, and the United Arab Emirates on 28 November 2000.

[179] Thus, for example, the rapprochement between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia during the presidency of Muhammad Khatami included joint calls for turning the Middle East into a zone free from WMD (Barletta and Tarzi 1999: 30).

Iraq and the international community over the UNSCOM inspections, the president of the Islamic Republic had underlined – on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference – the importance of the implementation of the relevant Iraq-related UN Security Council resolutions as well as the complete elimination of Iraq's WMD capabilities (S/1998/165, 1998: 2). Such Iranian statements were subsequently repeated by other Iranian authorities who expressed their serious concern over the standstill in UN weapons inspection activities in Iraq.[180] Thus, even though criticizing UNSCOM of not being transparent and politically independent[181] and thereby questioning the reliability of the information provided by the commission, and even though making it known that the Islamic Republic was basically against ad hoc arms control arrangements created outside existing multilaterally negotiated treaty mechanisms, the representatives of the Islamic Republic gave their full support to the efforts of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) – the successor of UNSCOM established in December 1999 – to continue the UN-mandated weapons inspections in Iraq.[182]

The question of Iraq's WMD and the relative ease with which the international community managed to devise diplomatic responses to counter the Iraqi threat led Iranian officials to repeat their historical grievances against foreign governments. Referring to the Islamic Republic's loneliness in the face of Iraq's chemical weapons use during the Iran–Iraq war, the Iranians kept on asking why Iraq had not been considered a threat at the time when it had actually been using WMD. Expressing the bitterness felt by the Iranians, the Islamic Republic's representative addressing the fifth Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in May 2000, for example, made a call for strong international condemnation of those countries that had supplied chemical materials and technology to Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war and thereby made it possible for Iraq to carry out its crimes in the first place (Khareghani 2000: 2). Moreover, in the summer of 2002, Iranian officials eagerly alluded to a news report by *The New York*

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[180] Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 114) and author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002. It should be noted here that Iranian pronouncements on Iraq's WMD were regularly accompanied with balancing allusions to Israel's WMD capabilities.

[181] The fact that the budget of UNSCOM was independent of the general budget of the UN and that the staff of UNSCOM mainly consisted of nationals of those states that made the biggest contributions to the commission's work – whether in terms of providing financial or human resources or intelligence information – sustained the perception in many countries, including Iran, that UNSCOM's operations were politically controlled by a handful of governments, mainly the United States (Blix 2004: 32).

[182] Author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002, and author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002. For a discussion of UNMOVIC, see Lewis (2001: 64–68).

Times which in its article of 17 August – based on interviews with high-ranking U.S. military figures – revealed that the United States had covertly provided military planning and intelligence assistance to Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war, even though the U.S. government had been well informed of Iraq's record of chemical warfare.[183]

Apart from the authorities of the Islamic Republic, Iranian non-governmental organizations, such as The Society Supporting War Veterans Wounded by WMD, sought to keep the record and the consequences of Iraq's chemical weapons use in international limelight. As part of their activities, Iranian NGO provided detailed information about their country's chemical casualties to the UN as well as to foreign governments, condemned the support given by Western governments to Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war, and demanded that the war-time suppliers of chemical materials and technology to Iraq should be brought to justice "through internationally recognized channels."[184] In this sense, Iranian NGO – whose actions were regularly harnessed by the authorities of the Islamic Republic to support official Iranian diplomacy – seemed to respond to the call made by the Khatami administration that the civil society in various parts of the world should advance the cause of global security networking and, by extension, international arms control (Zarif and Alborzi 1999: 117).[185]

4.1.4.3 Iran's discontent with international implementation of the CWC

Article XI

Following the Islamic Republic's ratification of the CWC in 1997, Iran's dissatisfaction with the states parties' implementation of article XI of the convention became a dominant feature of its diplomatic argumentation on chemical disarmament. The representatives of the Khatami administration strongly criticized the export controls of the Australia Group which they saw as an obstacle to developing countries' economic, technological, and scientific development. In Iran's opinion, Australia Group export controls were against the spirit and the letter of the CWC and thereby undermined the credibility and the relevance of the convention. If the Third World

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[183] Author's correspondence with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, August 2002, and *The New York Times* (17 August 2002).
[184] See *IRNA* (4 July 2000, 14 October 2000, and 27 April 2002).
[185] For a discussion of the concept of civil society in the Islamic Republic, as defined by the Khatami-led Iranian reformists, see Ansari (2000: 144–148).

countries' right, recorded in article XI of the CWC, to receive economic, scientific, and technological benefits from their participation in the treaty continued to be compromised by the advanced industrialized states parties, Iranian officials maintained, there would be a growing risk that some CWC member states would start to overlook their treaty obligations and that non-members would decide to permanently disregard the convention. (CD/PV.812, 1999: 4; Alborzi 1999: 3 and Zarif 2001: 1)

Accordingly, Iranian officials called on Western governments to commit themselves to the full implementation of the CWC and to recognize that violations of article XI would be as serious as those of article I which prohibited the states parties from developing, producing, otherwise acquiring, stockpiling or retaining, using, and transferring chemical armaments. The Iranians spoke for the abolition of Australia Group export controls and reminded the members of the group that it was their duty under the CWC to secure developing countries' full access to chemical materials and technology as well as to assist them in the field of peaceful chemical activities. Responding to Western governments' proliferation concerns, the authorities of the Islamic Republic stressed that the CWC provided the necessary assurances that any violation of article I of the treaty would be efficiently verified. The OPCW, Iranian officials added, was the only legitimate international authority to examine and address issues pertaining to CWC compliance. (Khareghani 2000: 3; Alborzi 2001: 2 and C-III/NAT.4, 1998: 1)

Oftentimes, Iran allied itself with other like-minded CWC states parties to advance its diplomatic objectives. Thus, in November 1998, for example, the Islamic Republic, Pakistan, and Cuba submitted a joint draft resolution to the CWC Conference of the States Parties in which the three governments registered their demand that all extra-CWC export controls against the states parties should be removed. The draft resolution maintained that the CWC had not envisaged any export controls in chemical trade between the member states[186] and stressed that no state party should undermine the

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[186] It is important to emphasize here that, in Iran's opinion, export control measures should be directed only towards countries that were not participating in the CWC (Zarif 2001: 1). The Convention itself requires the states parties to implement specific restrictions on transfers of certain chemicals to countries that have not joined the CWC. According to the treaty, chemicals belonging to the so-called "Schedule 1" category – which comprises known chemical warfare agents such as sarin, mustard gas, and their immediate precursors, that have few if any legitimate applications – can be transferred only among the states parties in limited amounts and for particular purposes. Transfers of Schedule 1 chemicals to and from countries that are not parties to the CWC are prohibited. In April 2000, CWC states parties decided that also the so-called "Schedule 2" chemicals – which include toxic chemicals and precursors that are utilized in small quantities for commercial purposes – cannot be exported to, or imported from, countries that have not joined the treaty. The CWC allows transfers of "Schedule 3" chemicals – which refer to

authority of the OPCW to verify compliance with the convention by resorting to unilateral action. It also urged the states parties to review their existing export control practices and to render them consistent with the obligations set in article XI of the CWC. Finally, the draft resolution called on the member states to report to the Conference of the States Parties on the damages caused to their socio-economic development by extra-CWC export controls. (C-III/NAT.4, 1998: 1–2)

In May 2001, the Islamic Republic tabled an initiative, supported by a dozen of other CWC member states,[187] which expanded the scope of the November 1998 three-party initiative by making a call for the establishment of an international cooperation committee that would be responsible for facilitating the implementation of article XI of the CWC. According to Iran, such a committee – whose exact terms of reference, composition, and functions were left open to be decided by the OPCW Executive Council – would enable the states parties, for example, to bring up cases in which they had been prevented from obtaining chemical materials and technology for peaceful purposes before a body that represented all CWC member states' interests.[188]

Not unexpectedly, the Iranian initiative – which was a diplomatic expression of the core Iranian view according to which the problems related to the implementation of article XI of the CWC could be solved only through a "rule-based and institutionalized approach" – did not receive the support of the CWC states parties belonging to the Australia Group. Iranian representatives acknowledged that the chances for the establishment of the committee were far from good and lamented that developing countries had no institutional or diplomatic means to pressure Western governments to accept the notion that there existed an inseparable link between disarmament and development. The Islamic Republic claimed that the export controls of the Australia Group had caused serious damage, among others, to its petrochemical industry as well

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chemicals and precursors produced in large commercial quantities but which can also be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons – for peaceful purposes to countries that are not parties to the convention. Iran, it should be pointed out, was among the CWC member states that supported the establishment of a ban on the transfers of Schedule 3 chemicals, too. This diplomatic stance of the Islamic Republic seemed to stem, above all, from the Iranian calculation that the economic implications of a Schedule 3 transfer ban would force non-members such as Israel – where the ban on Schedule 2 chemicals had already awakened fears that the country would lose its access to sources of chemical supply and to important export markets – to seriously consider joining the CWC. (Tucker 2001: 3; Feakes 2001: 46 and Steinberg 2000b)

[187] The other countries supporting Iran's May 2001 initiative made at the sixth CWC Conference of the States Parties were as follows: Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malesia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Yemen, and Cuba.

[188] This paragraph draws upon C-VI/DEC/CRP.18 (2001: 1–3) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

as imposed major costs on its economy because Iran had been forced to obtain highly-needed chemical materials and technology from expensive alternative sources. The restrictions of the Australia Group and the politically motivated discriminatory considerations behind them, Iranian officials stressed, had also strengthened the hand of those within the Islamic Republic's political elite who pointed to the Majlis declaration attached to Iran's CWC ratification instrument and called for Iran's withdrawal from the CWC. Simultaneously, however, Iranian officials recognized that it was highly unlikely that their government would actually put the Majlis declaration into effect.[189]

In spite of the Islamic Republic's protests that some non-members of the CWC had not been targeted by Australia Group export controls while certain CWC states parties of good standing had been forced to face the consequences of such restrictions, Iranian authorities did not give up their efforts to broker a CWC-based solution to the diplomatic disagreements over the interpretation of article XI of the convention. In contrast, Iran sought accommodation with the Australia Group and signalled that it would be prepared to accept the existence of the group and its export controls if those restrictions were exclusively directed at CWC non-members, such as Iraq, and not at the states parties. As stated by the Iranian representative addressing the CWC Conference of the States Parties in October 2002: "Under the circumstances, it may be somewhat difficult to counter the argument that such informal controls [of the Australia Group] are necessitated by the realities of the current international security environment." Still, the Islamic Republic also continued to point out to the members of the Australia Group that if they were not convinced of the OPCW's ability to verify compliance with the CWC, they should – instead of relying on a separate, extra-conventional monitoring mechanism – raise such concerns within the CWC framework and seek to improve the treaty in cooperation with other states parties. Diplomatic deliberations on proliferation concerns and article XI, Iranian officials underscored, could – and should – go hand in hand.[190]

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[189] This paragraph draws upon author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and author's correspondence with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, November 2002.

[190] This paragraph draws upon Zarif (2001: 2); Zamaninia (2002: 3–4) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

The role and the future of the OPCW

The Islamic Republic claimed that Western governments' distrust of the CWC became apparent not only from their unbending diplomatic stance with regard to the interpretation of the treaty's article XI, but also from their policies vis-à-vis the OPCW, the international organization established by the states parties to oversee the execution of the CWC. In the Iranian analysis, the Americans, in particular, sought to put major diplomatic pressure on the OPCW in order to get the organization under their control. Such a U.S. policy, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out, was a main cause, among others, for the OPCW's financial problems. By taking advantage of its budgetary and financial leverage, the Iranians maintained, the U.S. government – whose contributions cover about one-fifth of the OPCW's expenses – tried to diplomatically blackmail the organization and to walk over other CWC states parties in The Hague.[191]

Iran's criticism of American diplomacy in the OPCW intensified after the inauguration of George W. Bush as the president of the United States in January 2001. In many respects, the Islamic Republic's verbal attacks against the Bush administration were responses to the latter's highly critical pronouncements on the Islamic Republic's domestic and foreign policies.[192] Yet they also strongly reflected the Iranian belief – shared by many other governments as well – that under the Bush administration, the United States had adopted a hostile attitude towards international arms control and founded its diplomacy almost exclusively on unilateral power politics.[193] The fate of José Maurício Bustani, the OPCW's first director-general who was ultimately forced to leave his post in April 2002 as a result of a diplomatic offensive launched against him by the United States, was alluded to by Iranian officials as one manifestation of U.S. unilateralism.[194]

The Iranians – who eventually voted against the director-general's dismissal at the OPCW – rejected the accusations made against the Brazilian diplomat and maintained

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[191] This paragraph draws upon Alborzi (2001: 1–2) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[192] Iranian authorities' views of the Bush administration – and vice versa – will be discussed in greater detail below in chapter 5.

[193] Note, for example, the Iranian foreign minister's letter of 16 March 2002 to the UN secretary-general which contained the following paragraph: "There has been a growing trend within the current United States administration to undermine multilateral efforts aimed at addressing global menaces ranging from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to environmental degradation" (Kharrazi 2002).

[194] The Americans accused Bustani of financial mismanagement as well as of efforts to expand the OPCW's activities to areas that were outside the organization's mandate. For the details of the so-called Bustani affair, see *Arms Control Today* (May 2002).

that the United States wanted to get rid of Bustani because he was "too independent for the Americans." The OPCW director-general's independence, Iranian officials explained, was a headache for the Bush administration for two specific reasons. First of all, it was against the interests of U.S. chemical industries whose representatives fiercely lobbied the White House to weaken the ability of the OPCW to interfere with sensitive commercial activities. U.S. chemical industry lobbyists, the Iranian argument went, hoped to see the OPCW reduced to an international body concentrating on challenge inspections and on the destruction of existing chemical weapons arsenals. Secondly and more importantly, the Iranians continued, both the U.S. chemical industry executives and the country's political leadership shared the belief that the United States did not actually need the OPCW because, as the only superpower, it already possessed the means to deal with the dangers of chemical weapons proliferation by itself.[195]

Although the Islamic Republic informed at the time of the Bustani affair that it had not seen any evidence of the director-general's alleged financial mismanagement or of actitivities exceeding his mandate, in the end, Iran's position in the matter stemmed from more fundamental considerations than from those related to the person and the actions of the OPCW's highest official. On the one hand, Iranian officials argued that the U.S. efforts to oust Bustani were against the letter of the CWC which emphasized the independent nature of the director-general's position as well as the international character of his responsibilities. If those core principles were compromised, Iranian representatives asserted, it would erode the status of the OPCW and set a dangerous international precedent whereby any duly elected head of an international organization could become "vulnerable to the whims of one or a few major contributors." On the other hand, the Islamic Republic was strongly against the manner in which the United States handled the Bustani affair. By sidelining the relevant organs of the OPCW in the process, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, the Americans breached the rule of law and violated the OPCW's core organizational principles: transparency, equality, and fair and just treatment of all CWC states parties. On 25 July 2002, at the first special session of the CWC Conference of the States Parties, the member states elected a new director-general for the OPCW. The Islamic Republic voted for the election of Rogelio Pfirter, the U.S.-supported candidate from Argentina, whose views on the OPCW's role

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[195] This paragraph draws upon author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (C) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Alborzi (2001: 2).

and future managed to convince Iran of the Argentinian diplomat's qualifications for the job.[196]

But even if Iranian authorities regarded the outcome of the Bustani affair as a serious blow to multilateral diplomacy and called on the international community to reject the arbitrary policies of the United States, they continued to emphasize the indispensability of the CWC. The Islamic Republic had managed to become a key member of the group of Asian states parties within the OPCW, and since May 1998, had continuously served in the organization's Executive Council.[197] At the practical diplomatic level, and with its limited financial resources, Iran tried to contribute to the work of the OPCW first and foremost in areas that pertained to article X of the CWC.[198] For example, pointing to its experience in treating victims of chemical warfare, Iran officially pledged to provide medical assistance to future victims of chemical weapons use. Furthermore, together with the OPCW, Iranian authorities organized a host of international gatherings dealing with medical aspects of chemical warfare.[199] On the whole, Iran was not happy with international implementation of article X of the CWC, mainly because, as pointed out by Iranian officials, there were no assurances that the states parties would receive adequate international assistance should they become a target of a chemical attack. Nonetheless, the efforts by the OPCW to speed up and improve its article X-related activities were noted with satisfaction in Tehran. (Alborzi 2001: 3 and Zamaninia 2002: 3)

At the national level, and often with the help of the OPCW, the authorities of the Islamic Republic continued to inform Iranian civil servants, customs officials, and chemical industry representatives of their duties and responsibilities under the CWC. Also, the members of the Khatami administration actively worked on preparing the necessary domestic legislation for national execution of the CWC – a responsibility of each state party under article VII of the convention.[200]

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[196] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002; author's correspondence with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, November 2002, and Panahi-Azar (2002: 1–3).

[197] At its second session, the CWC Conference of the States Parties had elected Iran to sit on the Executive Council for a two-year term commencing on 12 May 1998. Since then, Iran had been re-elected for each consecutive two-year term.

[198] It is worth noting here that the head of the assistance and protection branch of the OPCW – responsible for matters concerning article X of the CWC – at the time was a former arms control diplomat of the Islamic Republic.

[199] For details of the medical cooperation between Iran and the OPCW, see Khareghani (2000: 4) and S/199/2000 (2000).

[200] This paragraph draws upon C-IV/NAT.11 (1999: 5) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

4.2 Biological Disarmament

4.2.1 From the BTWC to the end of the Iran–Iraq war

4.2.1.1 The Shah administration and biological disarmament

Even though the use of micro-organisms and toxins as a means of warfare goes back to ancient times,[1] efforts to control biological weapons are a recent phenomenon. The Geneva Protocol of 1925 constituted a landmark in this respect, for the protocol not only reaffirmed the prohibition of the use of poison during war – a ban already formulated at the 1899 and 1907 Hague International Peace Conferences – but extended the prohibition to the use of bacteriological weapons as well.[2] In practice, however, the value of the Geneva Protocol remained limited. This was mostly due to some states' reluctance to ratify the instrument, to the reservations made to it by many countries, and to the fact that the protocol did not restrain the research, development, or deployment of either chemical or biological armaments. (Kadlec et al. 1999: 97)

It was not until the late 1960s that biological arms control began to receive major international attention. Increasing worries about the ineffectiveness of the Geneva Protocol in hindering biological weapons proliferation, the indiscriminate nature and unpredictability of biological armaments and the epidemiological risks related to them, together with the lack of epidemiological control measures for biological weapons, led to a diplomatic process that eventually brought about the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention which was opened for signature on 10 April 1972.[3] States' readiness to accept the obligations of the new treaty based above all on the general

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[1] For a discussion of the history of biological warfare, see Christopher et al. (1999: 17–19).

[2] At the time of the creation of the Geneva Protocol, biological weapons were referred to as bacteriological weapons. This was due to the fact that micro-organisms such as viruses and rickettsias were not known at the time. (Flowerree 1993: 999)

[3] Article I of the BTWC prohibits the states parties to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes. The prohibition recorded in article I also covers weapons, equipment and means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict. However, it should be stressed here that the BTWC does not prohibit research and development on protection against biological armaments. The problem with such work is that it is often almost impossible to conclude whether research and development on biological weapons is geared for defensive or offensive purposes.

conclusion drawn at the time that biological armaments lacked military utility.[4] (Christopher et al. 1999: 27 and Smithson 1998: 1)

Iran was among the original signatories of the BTWC. The Shah administration signed the treaty on 10 April 1972, and the Iranian parliament ratified it on 22 August 1973, some 19 months before the convention entered into force on 26 March 1975 after 22 governments – including the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, the depositary governments – had deposited their ratification instruments. Nonetheless, the Shah government's approach to the BTWC was somewhat reserved, for although the Iranians had supported multilateral diplomatic deliberations on biological disarmament, they had been of the opinion that disarmament steps in the biological field should be inseparably linked with similar measures in the area of chemical armaments. (A/C.1/PV.1756, 1970: 13 and A/C.1/PV.1808, 1971: 8).

Iran's insistence on the inseparability of biological and chemical disarmament stemmed from the concern, shared by many other countries as well, that the conclusion of a distinct accord dealing with biological weapons would undermine diplomatic efforts towards a ban on chemical weapons – which were viewed as a bigger threat than biological weapons – and divert the international community's attention from chemical arms control. Also, Iran feared that the adoption of a separate biological weapons convention might weaken the Geneva Protocol's ban on the use of chemical armaments. In the end, however, the Shah's government did not oppose the conclusion of the BTWC, even if Iranian officials did express the hope that the new treaty would increase the prospects for an early conclusion of a chemical disarmament instrument. In this context, they referred to article IX of the BTWC which obligated the states parties to continue negotiations in good faith with a view to reaching early agreement on a chemical disarmament treaty. The stance that biological and chemical disarmament were intimately intertwined was a constant theme in Iran's biological arms control argumentation right until the final days of the Shah's regime. (A/PV.2046, 1972: 5; A/C.1/PV.1881, 1972: 4 and A/S-10/PV.18, 1978: 339)

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[4] There are three main sets of issues that still continue to seriously undermine the military utility of biological weapons. The first involves the problems related to the maintenance of the virulance of biological warfare agents during storage, delivery, and dissemination. The second class of issues pertains to the difficulties in assessing what effects biological warfare agents will have on the target as well as non-targets. The fact that biological warfare – because of the inevitable incubation period biological agents need in order to affect the target – is not suitable for military situations requiring immediate impact

4.2.1.2 The First Review Conference of the BTWC

The biological weapons convention of 1972 was one of the many international agreements that Iran's post-revolutionary leadership inherited from the Shah period. While the decision-makers of the newly founded Islamic Republic did not see any reason to question Iran's participation in the BTWC, neither did they seek to formulate a special role for their country in the area of biological arms control. The question of biological armaments thus remained a secondary issue on Islamic Iran's diplomatic agenda. Internationally, however, biological weapons were attracting increasing attention. Above all, the outbreak of anthrax in Sverdlovsk in the Soviet Union in 1979 not only raised major international concern over the Soviet compliance with the BTWC,[5] but it also added to the already existing doubts over the convention's ability to assure compliance with its provisions. Furthermore, many BTWC states parties feared that the advances that were being made in biotechnology would precipitate renewed interest among military establishments in biological armaments. (Flowerree 1993: 1006)

Not surprisingly, Iranian officials, occupied with matters related to the regime change in their country, stood on the sidelines of the biological arms control debate. In March 1980, however, the Islamic Republic, along with 52 other countries, took part in the work of the First Review Conference of the BTWC and presented its views on the convention's performance. Given the concerns among the member states over the effectiveness of the BTWC, and the important fact that the treaty did not include any verification provisions, the major part of the review conference's work centered around the question of how to ensure the states parties' compliance with their treaty obligations and specifically around articles V and VI of the BTWC.[6] Sweden – supported by many

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constitutes the third major factor eroding the military utility of biological armaments. (Martin 2002: 71–74)

[5] In the aftermath of the Sverdlovsk incident, the Soviet Union rejected any implication that it was not complying with the provisions of the BTWC. According to the Soviet explanation, there had been an outbreak of gastric anthrax in Sverdlovsk in April 1979 due to consumption of contaminated meat. More than a decade later, in May 1992, however, Russia's president Boris Yeltsin admitted that an accident in a local biological weapons production plant had been the real cause of the outbreak. For the details of the Sverdlovsk incident, see Meselson et al. (1999).

[6] Article V of the BTWC obligates the states parties "to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of the provisions of, the Convention." It further states that "consultation and cooperation pursuant to this article may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter." Article VI of the BTWC, in turn, gives each state party the right to lodge a complaint with the UN Security Council if it finds that another state party is acting in breach of the obligations of the BTWC. Such a complaint, as stated in article VI, "should include all possible evidence confirming its validity, as well as a request for its consideration by the Security Council." The Security

neutral, non-aligned, and Western governments – made a proposal at the conference for the creation, through a treaty amendment, of a permanent consultative committee comprised of expert representatives from the member states. The purpose of the Swedish initiative was to establish a multilateral diplomatic mechanism for the BTWC's consultation and cooperation element which could then be activated whenever a compliance concern would arise. (Flowerree 1993: 1008 and Sims 2001: 32)

Sweden envisaged a fact-finding function for the consultative committee by arguing that the committee, with whom the states parties would be obliged to cooperate, should be entrusted with a well-defined mandate and the necessary resources to conduct fact-finding missions in order to objectively assess whether a treaty violation had taken place or not. In addition, Sweden proposed that the states parties could lodge a compliance-related complaint with the UN Security Council, as prescribed in article VI, only after the consultative committee had reported the findings of its investigations as well as the views of its experts to all the member states. Hence, the supporters of the Swedish conference initiative sought to challenge the decisive position bestowed on the permanent members of the Security Council in article VI by trying to separate the fact-finding stage of the BTWC's complaint procedure from the views of the permament council members who, by using their veto rights, could, for whatever reason, prevent a compliance investigation from occurring and thereby prevent the international community from determining whether a violation under the BTWC had taken place. (BWC/CONF.I/C/SR.3, 1980: 2 and Goldblat and Bernauer 1991: 15)

Iran lent its support to the Swedish proposal. The Iranian representative addressing the review conference expressed the Islamic Republic's satisfaction with the fact that there had not so far been need for resorting to the BTWC's complaint procedure. Simultaneously, however, she maintained that the mechanism itself was not fully satisfactory because it was vulnerable to the views of the UN Security Council's permanent members. As the establishment of a consultative committee through a treaty amendment would make the complaint procedure more immune to political exigencies and to discriminative practices, the Iranian representative argued, Sweden's conference initiative corresponded to the Islamic Republic's position in the matter. The Iranian

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Council has the ultimate authority to decide whether a complaint made against a state party will lead to an investigation. As stipulated in article VI of the BTWC: "Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to cooperate in carrying out any investigation which the Security Council may initiate, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, on the basis of the complaint received by the Council. The Security Council shall inform the States Parties of the results of the investigation."

official also made it known that the Islamic Republic would welcome any other proposal designed to improve and strengthen article VI of the BTWC. As, in the end, the Swedish call for a treaty amendment did not receive the support of the Soviet Union and its allies – who found the original complaint procedure satisfactory – and that of most Western governments – eager not to open the convention for amendments – the establishment of the consultative committee failed to materialize.[7] (BWC/CONF.I/C/SR.3, 1980: 5; BWC/CONF.I/SR.8, 1980: 10–11 and Flowerree 1993: 1008)

Apart from presenting Iran's position in the complaint procedure issue, the representative of the Islamic Republic expressed her government's deep regret that the BTWC member states' obligation to negotiate in good faith to complete a chemical weapons convention – as referred to in the preamble of the BTWC and in the convention's article IX – had not led to concrete results. Iran demanded the states parties to fulfill this treaty obligation and underlined that a ban on chemical weapons was too important an issue to be left for the major powers to decide on, even if the Iranians simultaneously recognized the major powers' crucial role in diplomatic deliberations on chemical disarmament. The Islamic Republic also called for measures that would contribute to the universality of the BTWC. Iranian officials characterized the treaty as "an important step on the road to international confidence and security" and hoped that the greatest possible number of states would accede to the BTWC. Moreover, Iran hoped that the countries that had already joined the convention would agree on a mechanism making it possible for review conferences to be held at regular intervals or as required so that the functioning of the BTWC could be reviewed and the convention kept up to date with changing circumstances.[8] (BWC/CONF.I/SR.8, 1980: 11)

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[7] Nevertheless, the Swedish initiative set in motion a diplomatic process which sought to clarify and strengthen the BTWC's complaints mechanism in the future. The final declaration of the 1980 review conference dealt with the issue by referring to article V of the BTWC and stating that the procedures under that article include, among others, "the right of any State Party subsequently to request that a consultative meeting open to all States Parties be convened at expert level" (Flowerree 1993: 1008).

[8] Article XII of the BTWC states that, five years after the entry into force of the convention, or earlier if requested by a majority of the states parties, the member states should hold a conference to review the treaty's operation. Basically, then, there was no legal obligation for the states parties to convene more than once. Nevertheless, a second BTWC review conference was held in September 1986, and in the third review conference of September 1991 the member states finally decided that there should be review conferences on a permanent basis, that is, once every five years.

4.2.1.3 The war period

Iran's participation in the First Review Conference of the BTWC took place at a time when the country's foreign policy establishment was going through fundamental changes. The reorganization of the Iranian foreign ministry to correspond with the country's post-revolutionary political and ideological climate resulted not only in a major personnel reshuffle, but also led to a situation where the country's foreign policy officials were faced with the formidable task of delineating the new regime's positions on a wide array of diplomatic issues.[9] Iran's performance at the BTWC's first review conference seemingly reflected the turmoil in the Islamic Republic's political scene. By strictly sticking to the treaty-related issues raised at the conference and by leaning on a vocabulary stemming from the Shah period, the Islamic Republic's conference statements were indicative of a reactive and hesitant diplomatic approach.

Biological arms control remained a marginal theme on the Islamic Republic's diplomatic agenda also after the policy-makers in Tehran had started to get a grip on the conduct of the new regime's foreign affairs. As the Iran–Iraq war and Iraq's use of chemical weapons in that conflict became the overriding concerns for the Islamic Republic's arms control officials, however, the issue of biological weapons, by becoming an element of Iran's diplomatic effort against Iraq's chemical warfare, got a new lease of life in Iranian diplomacy. In other words, the Islamic Republic's war-time biological arms control operations became tightly linked with the issue chemical armaments.[10]

Still, at times, Iranian officials differentiated between biological and chemical weapons when referring to Iraqi WMD use in the Iran–Iraq conflict. For example, in 1984, when Iraq escalated its chemical warfare and the Islamic Republic

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[9] For the changes in the Iranian foreign policy establishment after the revolution, see Menashri (1990: 9, 97, 244–245).

[10] Of course, the fact that Iraq most probably did not use biological warfare agents in the course of the 1980–1988 war ultimately explains why the Islamic Republic's war-time biological arms control operations were subordinated to Iran's chemical diplomacy. Iranian officials subsequently acknowledged that, contrary to their war-time claims, they were not aware of Iraqi use of biological warfare agents during the Iran–Iraq conflict – either against Iranian targets or Iraq's own Kurdish population. It should be noted, however, that independently of the Iranians, a number of charges have been made to the effect that Iraq used biological warfare agents in the course of the 1980–1988 war. Iraqi Kurds, for example, have claimed that the regime of Saddam Hussein used biological weapons against them during the conflict, in addition to which some individual experts have maintained that Iraq's attack against the town of Halabja in March 1988 involved the use of not only chemical but biological agents as well. (Author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; Cordesman and Wagner 1996: 893 and *Washington File*, 19 September 2000)

correspondingly enhanced its diplomatic offensives against the employment of chemical armaments, Iran accused Iraq of having used chemical as well as biological warfare agents – a reference was made to toxins and mycotoxins – against Iran from the outset of the war.[11] (CD/PV.242, 1984: 10 and A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 56)

Yet in contrast to Iran's meticulous statements on Iraq's chemical weapons use, its references to Iraq's biological armaments were general accusations that failed to provide any details of the alleged Iraqi biological warfare. This feature of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation – together with the post-war Iranian acknowledgement that the Islamic Republic had no information about Iraqi use of biological armaments in the Iran–Iraq conflict – illustrated that Iran's biological weapons accusations were war propaganda. Iranian references to Iraqi biological weapons also showed how the officials of the Islamic Republic occasionally mistook biological weapons for chemical ones. In February 1984, for example, Iran's foreign minister claimed at the CD that some foreign governments had provided Iraq with biological weapons. A closer reading of foreign minister Vilayati's statement, however, suggests that what he actually meant was chemical weapons. Similarly, when discussing Iraq's use of chemical weapons, Iranian officials sometimes referred to the BTWC in order to make the point that international law forbade chemical warfare. Of course, the Iranian references to the BTWC can also be interpreted as a diplomatic effort to seek argumentative support in a situation where there was no distinct chemical disarmament treaty to lean on. The preamble and article VIII of the BTWC – which emphasize the significance of the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and call upon all states to comply with them – contained the legal message the Iranians wanted to convey. (CD/PV.242, 1984: 9, 11 and CD/PV.254, 1984: 30)

The primacy of the issue of chemical weapons in Iran's war-time arms control diplomacy became further evident in connection with the Second Review Conference of the BTWC held in Geneva in September 1986. While prior to the conference Iranian officials had referred to the weaknesses of the BTWC and especially to the treaty's lack of a verification mechanism, at the review conference itself they did not focus on specific BTWC-related issues but concentrated, instead, on discussing Iraq's chemical crimes. As admitted by the Iranians, their goverment viewed the conference as a good

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[11] Iran had accused Iraq of the use of weapons that "spread germs" already during the battle for the city of Susangerd in November 1980. Later, however, the Iranians retracted from this allegation. (Karsh 1993: 35)

opportunity to emphasize the need for states to respect the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. (CD/PV.242, 1984: 8; CD/PV.262, 1984: 9 and BWC/CONF.II/SR.8, 1986: 11)

According to the Islamic Republic's representatives, the world had significantly changed since the first BTWC review conference. The reason for this, the Iranians maintained, was Iraq's resort to chemical armaments which had eroded the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol as well as the BTWC. The Islamic Republic stressed that the international community's indifference to Iraq's breaches of international law had encouraged Saddam Hussein's regime to continue the use of WMD and thereby demanded the review conference to set up a mechanism through which state compliance with the Geneva Protocol could be guaranteed. Iran's conference delegation also called for international measures that would pressure Iraq to stop the use of chemical and toxin weapons[12] and for a comprehensive ban on the export of dual-use chemical substances and technology to Iraq. Finally, the Islamic Republic asked the conference participants to declare the use of chemical armaments a war crime. (BWC/CONF.II/SR.8, 1986: 11)

In addition to engaging themselves in a round of heated exchange of words with their Iraqi counterparts,[13] as well as underscoring the importance of the BTWC's universality, Iranian representatives sought to influence the wording of the review conference's final declaration, and in particular the section that dealt with article VIII of the BTWC. The Iranians hoped that the final declaration would note with concern the violations of the Geneva Protocol as verified by the specialists dispatched to Iran by the UN secretary-general in February 1986.[14] Moreover, they wanted the final declaration to call on all the states parties as well as on all BTWC signatories that were parties to the Geneva Protocol, meaning Iraq,[15] to strictly comply with the provisions of the protocol. Finally, the Iranians hoped that the final declaration would call on those countries not yet parties to the Geneva Protocol to accede to it at the earliest possible date. (BWC/CONF.II/SR.8, 1986: 11 and *DDA document* 1986)

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[12] The remark on toxin weapons is congruent with the earlier Iranian assertions claiming that Iraq had used biological armaments in its war against the Islamic Republic. Nevertheless, beyond this single remark, Iran's statement at the 1986 review conference did not elaborate on the biological dimension of the Iraqi threat.

[13] See BWC/CONF.II/SR.8 (1986: 11, 13–14).

[14] See above section 4.1.1.2 p. 230.

[15] Iraq had signed the BTWC in May 1972, but did not ratify it until June 1991. The Iraqi ratification of the biological treaty was a direct result of the UN Security Council resolution 687 which effectively forced Iraq to become a BTWC state party.

Even though the review conference, against Iranian wishes, did not condemn Iraq for its breaches of the Geneva Protocol, its final declaration did make a reference to the report of the UN chemical weapons experts who visited Iran in early 1986, appealed to the members of the Geneva Protocol to fulfill their obligations under that document, as well as urged all countries not yet parties to the Geneva Protocol to adhere to it at the earliest possible date. Iranian representatives welcomed the review conference's adoption of a final declaration by consensus, but regretted the fact that the conference had failed to condemn Iraq's use chemical warfare in strong and clear terms. Alluding specifically to the diplomatic behaviour of Jordan, one of Iraq's staunchest supporters in the Iran–Iraq war, the Iranians also regretted that "one of the states parties to the Convention [BTWC] had endeavoured to obstruct such a condemnation." (BWC/CONF.II/13/II, 1986: 8 and BWC/CONF.II/SR.10, 1986: 5)

After the Second Review Conference of the BTWC, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic, fully occupied with efforts to stop Iraq's chemical warfare, rarely referred to the issue of biological disarmament. In December 1986, Iran was among the countries sponsoring the UN General Assembly resolution 41/58 A which dealt with the BTWC review conference held two months earlier. Among others, the resolution noted with satisfaction that by the time of the review conference, more than one hundred countries had become parties to the BTWC, including all permanent members of the UN Security Council.[16] Also, the General Assembly resolution underscored the importance of the BTWC's universality by calling on all signatory states that had not ratified the treaty to do so without delay as well as by calling on those states that had not yet signed the BTWC to do so at an early date. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1986,* 1990: 65)

In November 1987, Iran sponsored the UN General Assembly resolution 42/37 B that also pertained to the follow-up of the September 1986 review conference. Specifically, the resolution concerned the timetable of the exchange of information agreed upon by the BTWC states parties at the conference.[17] In order to generate trust among the BTWC member states that the convention's provisions were respected, the second review conference had agreed on the implementation of a set of diplomatic steps generally known as the BTWC confidence-building measures A, B, C, and D. These

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[16] The Islamic Republic had expressed its satisfaction with the broad member base of the BTWC already in its address to the September 1986 review conference (BWC/CONF.II/SR.8, 1986: 11).

[17] For the details of the General Assembly resolution 42/37 B, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987* (1992: 71–72).

voluntary, politically binding measures – which aimed to increase the transparency of the activities that involved the use of biological agents and toxins and were permitted by the BTWC – included the following undertakings: exchange of data on relevant research centers and laboratories (the so-called BTWC confidence-building measure A); exchange of information on all outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurances caused by toxins that seem to deviate from the normal pattern (confidence-building measure B); encouragement of publication of results of biological research directly related to the BTWC (confidence-building measure C); and active promotion of contacts between scientists engaged in biological research (confidence-building measure D). (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 71–72; Goldblat 1987: 412 and Sims 2001: 61, 64–65)

In the course of 1987 and 1988, the Islamic Republic kept on using multilateral diplomatic discussions on biological arms control as a venue to warn the international community of serious consequences if it continued to remain indifferent to Iraq's chemical warfare. Alluding to the report of the UN specialist group set by the UN secretary-general in the spring of 1987 to investigate the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war, Iranian representatives argued that international disinterest in Iraq's chemical crimes could irreparably weaken the Geneva Protocol and lead to a situation where the world would face an additional spectre, that of biological warfare. The Iranian references to the potential threat of biological weapons use suggested, for their part, that the Islamic Republic's earlier accusations of Iraq having used biological agents in the Iran–Iraq war had been unfounded. (CD/PV.425, 1987: 4 and CD/PV.460, 1988: 29)

4.2.2 From the cease-fire to the formation of the BTWC Ad Hoc Group

The coming into force of the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war did not alter the Islamic Republic's arms control priorities. As the post-war relations between Iran and Iraq remained highly tense and Iraq's chemical weapons continued to pose a major threat to the security of the Islamic Republic, international efforts pertaining to biological arms control were not of primary interest to Iranian decision-makers. At the same time, however, the issue of biological weapons was not totally absent from Iran's immediate post-war diplomatic argumentation. Thus, in October 1989, for example, the Islamic Republic's foreign minister, in his address to the UN General Assembly, asserted that

the international community's indifference to Iraq's chemical warfare during the Iran–Iraq war had encouraged Iraq not only to build significant arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, but also to qualitatively improve the lethality of the WMD in its possession (A/44/PV.13, 1989: 94–95).

Similarly, in March 1990, some five months before Iraq invaded neighbouring Kuwait, foreign minister Vilayati voiced his government's concern over the military capabilities and intentions of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. According to Vilayati, Iraq was engaged in an "extensive and ambitious" program of developing and stockpiling both chemical and biological weapons. Alluding to Iraq's arms ambitions, the Islamic Republic pointed out that the Middle East must be free from all kinds of WMD, including biological armaments. (CD/PV.543, 1990: 11 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 11)

4.2.2.1 The 1991 BTWC review conference

The Third Review Conference of the BTWC, held in Geneva in September 1991, marked the beginning of active Iranian diplomacy in the area of biological arms control. On the one hand, the timing of this change in Iran's diplomacy was related to the fact that the conference took place after Iraq had suffered a major defeat in the brief war of January–February 1991 against the U.S.-led coalition forces. In other words, the diminished danger of Iraq enabled Iranian officials to devote more attention to long-term diplomatic efforts and to put more emphasis on the issue of biological weapons.

On the other hand, the Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 itself had demonstrated that Iraq's biological warfare capabilities constituted a direct threat to a number of countries, including Iran. First of all, the coalition forces had fought the war against Iraq under the shadow of the possibility that Iraq's military might resort to chemical and biological warfare. Secondly, and more importantly, the first post-Gulf conflict biological weapons inspection in Iraq – carried out by UNSCOM in August 1991 – had confirmed that Iraq, a signatory to the BTWC, had been capable of researching, producing, testing, and storing biological warfare agents (Pearson 1993: 122).[18] Thus, whether or not the Iranian claim that the UNSCOM's findings had merely confirmed what the authorities of the Islamic Republic had already known and warned for[19] was true, the ramifications

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[18] It was not until 1995 that Iraq itself admitted to having pursued a biological weapons program (Smithson 2004: 169).

[19] Author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

of the UN weapons inspections in Iraq doubtlessly increased the importance of biological arms control on Islamic Iran's diplomatic agenda.

The 1990–1991 Gulf conflict and its aftermath left a major mark on the September 1991 BTWC review conference. Whereas at the time of the second review conference five years earlier many had still questioned the military value and utility of biological armaments (Goldblat 1987: 413), the Gulf conflict – together with fresh Western intelligence reports of biological weapons proliferation in the developing world – had brought about a dramatic change in the diplomatic mood. Hence, by the time of the Third Review Conference, the lure of biological armaments and the dangers posed by their proliferation had been widely recognized, a development which had resulted in renewed interest among the states parties in the development and strengthening of the BTWC.

Iran's pronouncements at the 1991 review conference reflected the new diplomatic circumstances. According to Iranian representatives, the Iran–Iraq war and the Gulf conflict had convinced the international community that "weapons of mass destruction must be annihilated." And due to the significant advances in biotechnology, the Iranians continued, biological weapons now constituted a serious threat to international security. In the Islamic Republic's opinion, the positive post-Cold War climate of the early 1990s in international politics offered a good opportunity for the states parties to improve the BTWC. Pointing to the central issue discussed at the review conference – that is, to the development of a legally binding verification mechanism for the convention –, the Iranians noted that they shared the other conference participants' worries about the proliferation of biological armaments as well as about the military potential of biotechnology, and that their country would support the development of a BTWC verification system intended for ensuring that governments fulfill their obligations under the convention. (Ranjbar 1991: 1–2)

In this context, however, Iranian representatives drew a qualitative distinction between two broad classes of non-compliance with the BTWC and argued that international responses to cases of non-compliance should vary according to the violation in question. The use of biological weapons, the officials of the Islamic Republic specified, was the gravest form of BTWC non-compliance and thereby required immediate reaction and verification measures on the part of the states parties, including on-site inspections. On the other hand, Iranian representatives continued,

other types of treaty non-compliance should be treated differently,[20] in addition to which a specific set of verification measures should be developed to monitor states' activities in the development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of biological agents. Referring to article VI of the BTWC, the Islamic Republic also stressed that when dealing with potential cases of treaty violation, the UN Security Council should remain objective and refrain from discriminatory decisions based on political expediency. Finally, the Iranians expressed their view, shared by many other conference delegations as well, that the creation of a verification mechanism for the BTWC should take place within the framework of an additional protocol, thus leaving the main text of the convention untouched.[21] (BWC/CONF.III/23, 1991: 111–112; Sims 2001: 57–58 and Ranjbar 1991: 5)

Another major issue discussed at the 1991 review conference was the information exchange mechanism that had been agreed upon at the 1986 conference and which aimed at serving as a functional substitute for verification by generating confidence among the member states (Sims 2001: 23). The five-year period between the second and third review conferences had convinced the states parties that the scope of the BTWC confidence-building measures was too limited and that something had to be done to improve the poor record of participation by the states parties in the mechanism. The Iranians, who had sponsored the UN General Assembly resolutions of 1988 and 1989 calling upon governments to partake in BTWC-related data exchange,[22] emphasized the important role information exchange in the strengthening of the BTWC and in the promotion of transparency among the states parties. Specifically, they alluded to the importance of the exchange of laboratorial information and named the document center of the UN secretariat as the focal point for data exchange between the BTWC member states. (Rosenberg 1993: 70 and Ranjbar 1991: 4)

As for other issues related to the review conference, Iranian representatives critically pointed out that the BTWC lacked definitions so far as the terms "microbial or other

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[20] No details were provided here.

[21] In the end, the review conference discussions on a BTWC verification apparatus led to a decision according to which an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts would be established to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint. The decision was a compromise between the majority view that favoured verification and the position of the United States which held that the creation of an effective verification system would not be possible and that, in fact, an ineffective verification mechanism would be dangerous because it could lull the states parties into a false sense of security. (Rosenberg 1993: 74–75 and Flowerree 1993: 1010)

[22] For the content of UN General Assembly resolutions 43/74 B of December 1988 and 44/115 C of December 1989, see *Yearbook of the United Nations 1988* (1994: 78–79) and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1989* (1997: 69–70).

biological agents" or "toxins" in article I of the convention were concerned. They also regretted that the term "peaceful purposes," mentioned in the same article, had not been given a precise definition. These definitional shortcomings, the Iranian delegates stressed, had to be corrected so that the obligations of the states parties under the BTWC could be widened to include the obligation to declare what biological and toxin agents the member states possessed in their territory or under their control or juristiction. The states parties, the Iranians added, should also be obligated to declare the total quantities of such agents in national possession as well as the purposes the agents were serving. Such declarations, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, would enable the member states to embark on detailed data exchange on biological and toxin agents as well as on relevant equipment. Despite its review conference calls, however, the Islamic Republic itself had not hitherto participated in the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism. Neither had the Iranians given any reasons for their refusal to provide information nor suggested what might lead their government to change its behaviour in the matter.[23] (Ranjbar 1991: 2–3)

Apart from the questions of verification and confidence-building, Iran's conference delegation pointed critically to the fact that the BTWC did not include an explicit prohibition on the use of biological weapons.[24] The Islamic Republic's interest in this definitional matter stemmed from the legal reality which made it possible for a country that was a party to both the BTWC and the Geneva Protocol to retain the reservations made to the protocol – concerning in-kind retaliation in the case of a chemical or biological attack – while simultaneously being bound not to develop, produce, stockpile, or otherwise acquire or retain biological weapons under the BTWC. In other

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[23] The Third Review Conference of the BTWC developed the treaty's confidence-building mechanism, first of all, by refining the original measures adopted in 1986. This was the case especially with respect to the confidence-building measure A which was extended to politically obligate the states parties to provide information about national facilities which have a substantial proportion of their resources devoted to biological research and development. Secondly, the review conference added the following three new measures to the confidence-building mechanism: declaration of legislation, regulations, and other measures taken by the member states to implement the BTWC (the so-called confidence-building measure E); declaration of past activities in offensive and/or defensive biological research and development programs (confidence-building measure F); and declaration of all facilities producing vaccines for the protection of humans (confidence-building measures G). (Sims 2001: 70–73 and Flowerree 1993: 1010)

[24] At the time the BTWC was being negotiated in the early 1970s, the issue of an explicit prohibition on the use of biological weapons was hotly debated by the negotiating parties. In the end, such prohibition was left out of the treaty text due to legal considerations pertaining to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. It was feared that if an explicit ban on the use of biological weapons under all circumstances was written down into a separate biological disarmament treaty, it would undermine the Geneva Protocol's norm against chemical warfare because no independent treaty stipulating a similar ban on the use of chemical armaments existed at the time. (Sims 2001: 152)

words, Iran, which had not reserved itself the right to retaliate when joining the Geneva Protocol, wondered how the reservations made to the protocol could be compatible with the BTWC's prohibition of biological weapons possession.[25]

This legal contradiction and the lack of an explicit prohibition on the use of biological weapons in the BTWC, Iranian officials asserted, constituted "a serious potential danger to international peace and security." As a result, Iranian delegates asked the review conference to consider how the states parties could correct the existing situation, in addition to which they called on all non-members of the Geneva Protocol to immediately join that instrument without any reservations and on all governments still retaining protocol reservations that did not exclude biological weapons from the scope of a national retaliation to cancel them. By joining the Geneva Protocol or by withdrawing their reservations to the protocol, the Iranians underlined, governments would contribute to the strengthening of the Geneva Protocol and thereby to the consolidation of the BTWC.[26] In this connection, the officials of the Islamic Republic also emphasized the importance of the BTWC's universality. Alluding specifically to the Middle Eastern context, they regretted that the "Zionist regime" had not joined either the NPT or the BTWC and portrayed Israel's reluctance to join those treaties as a source of tension in the region. (Ranjbar 1991: 3–4)

Yet another issue raised by the Islamic Republic at the 1991 review conference involved article VII of the BTWC which deals with international assistance to those state parties that have become victims of a violation of the treaty.[27] Iran's delegates noted that no detailed mechanism existed for the implementation of article VII and suggested that the UN and the world organization's specialized agencies could take the responsibility for devising a set of potential measures in this respect. The idea of the establishment of an international assistance fund was put forth by the Iranians as one

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[25] For a detailed discussion of the legal relationship between the Geneva Protocol reservations and the BTWC, see Sims (2001: 152–162).

[26] The 1991 BTWC review conference addressed the issue of Geneva Protocol reservations by stressing, in its final declaration, the importance of the withdrawal of "all reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol related to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention" (*Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference* 1991: 11).

[27] Article VII of the BTWC reads as follows: "Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to provide or support assistance, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to any Party to the Convention which so requests, if the [UN] Security Council decides that such Party has been exposed to danger as a result of violation of the Convention." Article VII thus only applies to cases in which both the treaty violator and the victim of the violation are parties to the BTWC, in addition to which it gives the UN Security Council the ultimate power to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether international assistance under the BTWC is necessary or not.

step towards giving a concrete substance to article VII.[28] The representatives of the Islamic Republic made a conference initiative with regard to article X of the BTWC as well.[29] Iran's proposal called for the establishment of a UN-supervised world data bank intended for "smoothing the flow of information in the field of genetic engineering, biotechnology and other scientific developments." This Iranian initiative became recorded in the review conference's final declaration.[30] (Ibid.: 4; BWC/CONF.III/23, 1991: 113, 120 and *Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference* 1991: 13)

4.2.2.2 The VEREX deliberations of 1992–1993

Following the 1991 BTWC review conference, international diplomatic efforts in the area of biological arms control continued to center around the topic of verification. As already mentioned above, at the Third Review Conference the states parties had agreed to create an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify, examine, and evaluate from a scientific and technical standpoint potential verification measures with respect to the prohibitions of the convention.[31] The Islamic Republic held to its newly invigorated approach to biological arms control by actively participating in the VEREX process

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[28] Eventually, Iran's fund proposal did not receive the review conference's support and the initiative was not recorded in the final declaration of the conference. Instead, the relevant section of the final declaration read as follows: "The Conference considers that in the event that this article [VII] might be invoked, the United Nations, with the help of appropriate intergovernmental organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), could play a coordinating role." (*Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference* 1991: 11)

[29] According to article X of the BTWC, the states parties "undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes." The states parties, the article reads, "shall also cooperate in contributing individually or together with other States or international organizations to the further development and application of scientific discoveries in the field of bacteriology (biology) for prevention of disease, or for other peaceful purposes." Article X further states that the BTWC "shall be implemented in a manner designed to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities."

[30] The relevant section of the final declaration read as follows: "The Conference considers that the establishment of a world data bank under the supervision of the United Nations might be a suitable way of facilitating the flow of information in the field of genetic engineering, biotechnology and other scientific developments" (*Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference* 1991: 13).

[31] This group of verification experts, which came to be known as VEREX, decided to focus its work on 21 potential verification measures. They fell into two broad categories, off-site and on-site measures. The former consisted of four main types of activity: *information monitoring* (consisting of publication surveillance, legislation surveillance, data on transfers and transfers requests, multilateral information sharing, and exchange visits); *data exchange* (declarations including notification); *remote sensing* (satellite, aircraft, and ground-based surveillance); and *inspections* (sampling and identification and observation and auditing). The latter were composed of *international arrangements*; *inspections* (interviewing, visual inspection, identification of key equipment, auditing, sampling, and identification and medical examination); and *continuous monitoring* (instruments and personnel). For the details of the VEREX process, see Leitenberg (1996: 48–51) and Sims (2001: 94–103).

which began in March 1992 and ended in September 1993.[32] Iran's VEREX delegation included experts from such national agencies and institutions as the foreign ministry, the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, as well the Medical Scientific University of Tehran. Iranian representatives' specific responsibilities in the VEREX process included work on on-site inspections – and specifically on the issues of interviewing, visual inspection, and medical examination – as well as on the observation element of off-site inspections.

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic pronouncements in the course of the VEREX process testified to a cautious Iranian approach to verification. Iran's VEREX representatives recognized that the BTWC needed a verification mechanism but, still, the major part of their argumentation focused on the verification system's potential problems. The financial implications of verification were among the chief Iranian worries. Airing the sentiment common among developing countries, the Islamic Republic argued that the running of a verification system, even a simple one, would be extremely expensive. Moreover, the Iranians stressed that beside the direct expenses involved, one should take into account the potential indirect costs. Such costs, Iranian officials noted, could include the rise in prices of many raw materials due to the efforts by the developed countries' biological industries to compensate for the added expenses caused by verification. Iran also feared that rising industry costs could give birth to corporate mergers creating industry giants that would be capable of dictating the prices on the market.[33] (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 3–4 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.27, 1992: 3)

In addition to emphasizing the necessity of a cost-effective verification system, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted that verification should not jeopardize BTWC states parties' commercial secrets and their confidential scientific and technological information. Furthermore, the Iranians expressed their concern over the effects of monitoring on the member states' sovereignty. Worried that verification could be used as a pretext for espionage, Iran's VEREX representatives spoke for the creation of a non-intrusive monitoring system which should not "look for violators, but rather to verify compliance." This conceptual point of departure, the officials of the Islamic

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[32] The 18-month VEREX exercise was divided into four sessions. The initial session (the so-called VEREX-1) took place between 30 March–10 April 1992, the second (VEREX-2) on 23 November–4 December 1992, the third (VEREX-3) on 24 May–4 June 1993, and the final session between 13–24 September 1993.

Republic maintained, should be combined with efforts to make the verification arrangement as reliable as possible. An unreliable monitoring system, the Iranians added, would generate false confidence in compliance among the states parties. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 4; BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.28, 1992: 2 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.94, 1992: 1)

It was during the VEREX process that the economic and technological aspects of the BTWC, as discussed in article X of the treaty, turned into a central theme in the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations. Voicing the developing countries' common stand, Iran's VEREX representatives made it clear that the creation of a BTWC verification apparatus ought to be accompanied with measures that strengthen the international implementation of article X. Drawing a linkage between BTWC verification and the execution of article X, the officials of the Islamic Republic referred to comprehensive implementation of article X as an absolute necessity. Iran's VEREX representatives warned that the problems suffered by developing countries in the field of food production as well as disease control and prevention posed an immediate threat to Third World states' security and survival but also an indirect danger to the well-being and security of the developed world. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 2; BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.26, 1992: 2–3 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.27, 1992: 2–3)

On the other hand, the Iranians actively called for concrete measures on the part of the advanced industrialized nations to ameliorate the medical, environmental, and agricultural problems suffered by the countries of the Third World – problems which, in the Iranian characterization, constituted a "natural biological bomb." The best way to help the countries in trouble, the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained, was to strengthen their material and intellectual resources in the field of biotechnology. Accordingly, Iran called on BTWC member states to devise, concomitantly with the efforts in the area of verification, mechanisms that would facilitate and accelerate biotechnology transfers to the Third World. The better the technology transferred, for example for the establishment of vaccine production facilities, the Iranians pointed out, the better the progress in the Third World would be. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.26, 1992: 2; BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 2 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.94, 1992: 1)

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[33] The similarity of these Iranian concerns to those raised by the Islamic Republic in the context of the CWC is striking (see above the relevant passages in section 4.1).

With article X in mind, the officials of the Islamic Republic also forcefully spoke against restrictions on biological transfers and against other measures that might hamper the BTWC states parties' economic and scientific development. In Iran's view, trade and cooperation in the field of biotechnology should be free from political considerations, discriminative practices, and ill-founded arms proliferation suspicions, for such transfer restrictions could put human lives in the developing world at jeopardy. In this connection, Iranian representatives made a difference between BTWC states parties and countries that had not joined the treaty by suggesting that technology transfers to the latter should always be supervised by the WHO. As far as other Iranian comments on the implementation of article X were concerned, the officials of the Islamic Republic called on advanced industrialized nations, among others, to reduce the prices of biological materials exported to the Third World and to furnish developing countries with the latest scientific information on rare and exogenous diseases. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.27, 1992: 3; BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 5 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.26, 1992: 3)

Even though Iran's VEREX delegation insisted on meticulous international implementation of article X, it acknowledged that there was a fine line between peaceful and military application of biotechnology. Accordingly, the representatives of the Islamic Republic supported international measures that aimed at distinguishing between banned and legitimate biological activities.[34] But while some VEREX delegations were of the opinion that there was a need to create an independent international organization for the running of the planned BTWC verification arrangement,[35] the Iranians – who focused on pointing to the financial costs resulting from the creation of a new international agency – took an opposite view. According to the Islamic Republic, existing organizations, such as the WHO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the UN Environment Programme, could well be charged with the task of monitoring. The WHO, for example, the Iranians argued, could conduct annual routine inspections at the biological facilities declared by the member states of the BTWC.

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[34] As one Iranian VEREX paper put it: "[...] with respect to biotechnological development in the last two decades and its position at the turn of the century, there are concerns that this technology might be misused for the production of biological weapons. Of course this is a legitimate concern which should be adequately addressed" (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 3).

[35] This view was prevalent, for example, among the countries of the European Union which subsequently, at the September 1994 BTWC Special Conference convened to examine the final report of VEREX, proposed the establishment of an independent verification inspectorate (Sims 2001: 111).

(BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 5 and BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.94, 1992: 2)

As regards the individual verification measures identified, examined, and evaluated by VEREX, the Iranian delegation presented its own assessment of their usefulness and acceptability. Relying on what they labelled as a "quantitative approach," the Iranians ranked the verification measures into an order of preference.[36] The measures that were most critically approached by the Islamic Republic included the following: aerial surveillance, satellite monitoring, intelligence activities, and export controls. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.30, 1992: 1–8)

The methods of verification aside, Iran's VEREX delegation also elaborated on the hypothetical scenario in which verification fails and biological weapons are being used. In such a situation, the Iranians concluded, the UN should have the capability to automatically dispatch a fact-finding team to the area where biological weapons use has occurred. By the same token, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted, BTWC states parties should agree on the creation of an assistance mechanism that would be activated whenever a member state would become a victim of biological warfare. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.25, 1992: 5)

4.2.2.3 The Special Conference of 1994

The pre-conference Iranian argumentation

During 1992–1994, the Islamic Republic presented and promoted its views on biological arms control outside the VEREX framework as well. By doing so, Iranian authorities sought to support the work of their VEREX delegation and to underscore their positions on matters that had been raised in the VEREX talks and elsewhere. Thus, the officials of the Islamic Republic reaffirmed that there was an inseparable link between the development of a verification apparatus for the BTWC and comprehensive international implementation of the treaty's article X. Unlike in the context of earlier international arms control instruments, such as the CWC, the Iranians warned, this time

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[36] There were seven basic criteria – all of which essentially epitomized the diplomatic concerns voiced by the Islamic Republic during the VEREX process – that were told to steer Iran's listing. In addition to weighing the reliability, practicability, feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and non-intrusiveness of the verification measures, the Iranians assessed to what extent such measures would put the states parties'

the states parties from the Third World would not yield to Western governments' verification aspirations, unless they were assured that the creation of the BTWC verification system would lead to the removal of all restrictions on the transfers, for peaceful purposes, of biological materials, equipment, and relevant scientific and technological information. The officials of the Islamic Republic called on the exporting countries to agree to a binding commitment to transfer biotechnology "at the broadest possible level" to the states parties from the developing world. (CD/PV.659, 1993: 7; A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 14, 21)

Iranian authorities regretted that developed countries had heretofore taken no heed of the developing countries' BTWC-related interests. In the Iranian opinion, the decision taken by the Australia Group in June 1993 to devise comprehensive export controls on biological agents and manufacturing equipment that could potentially be used in biological weapons programs was a good example of the developed countries' indifference to the needs of the Third World.[37] The Islamic Republic strongly condemned the Australia Group's June 1993 decision and said that it testified to the fact that the members of the group did not understand that a secured access to biotechnology had been, and still was, a key incentive for developing countries not only to join the BTWC, but also to comply with its provisions. Iranian representatives asserted that discriminatory, politically motivated "private club restrictions" seriously eroded the prospects for a consensus among the states parties in the issue of verification and merely contributed to an atmosphere of diplomatic suspicion and ill-will. They also emphasized that their country was ready to accept the creation of "transparent" international export controls but that such restrictions should, first, be agreed on within the BTWC framework and, secondly, be exclusively directed at countries that continued to remain outside the convention. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 14, 24; A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* 1994: 270)

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scientific, technological, and commercial secrets into jeopardy or interfere with their national sovereignty. (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.30, 1992: 2)

[37] For the Australia Group's June 1993 meeting, see <http://www.australiagroup.net/releases/ninety_three.htm>.

According to Iran, it was an imperative for the states parties to try to ensure that the provisions of article I of the BTWC were universally respected.[38] Nevertheless, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, international efforts to prevent military applications of biotechnology had to be based on decisions made multilaterally, involving all BTWC member states. They also underscored that although a verification mechanism was needed to monitor the behaviour of the states parties, the future system should not be misused to meddle in their legitimate activities. (A/C.1/48/SR.26, 1993: 7 and A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23)

Iran's biological arms control argumentation of 1992–1994 included a strong regional dimension, too. The officials of the Islamic Republic were of the opinion that the positive diplomatic spirit of the "new international environment" had to be translated into WMD disarmament arrangements in regional settings and especially in conflict-ridden areas such as the Middle East. Repeating their standard diplomatic position, Iranian authorities demanded Israel to accede to the BTWC as well as to the NPT so that the Arab countries remaining outside the BTWC – most notably Egypt and Syria – would join the convention. While never linking its actual BTWC behaviour to Israel's policies, the Islamic Republic echoed the Arab governments' linkage thinking further by arguing that the Israeli treaty accessions would also increase the popularity of the planned BTWC verification system among the Arab states that were already parties to the BTWC but had adopted a skeptical attitude towards the verification mechanism. More fundamentally, the Iranians stressed, Israel's participation in the BTWC and the NPT would contribute, first, to diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and, secondly, to the formation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East. (CD/PV.626, 1992: 5–6; CD/PV.659, 1993: 8 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 15)

Iranian officials claimed that the application of diplomatic double standard with respect to the Middle East by Western powers and especially the United States significantly contributed to Israel's unwillingness to respect the other regional states' arms control views. Not surprisingly, then, the authorities of the Islamic Republic took a critical stance on extra-regional proposals on Middle East arms control – such as the so-

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[38] After the end of the VEREX process, the Islamic Republic characterized the VEREX talks as important and stressed the need for the creation of a BTWC verification system. The Iranians also declared their intention to be closely and constructively involved in the development and strengthening of the treaty. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 14 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* 1994: 269–270)

called Bush initiative of 1991 which, among others, called on the regional states to join the BTWC – because they believed such proposals were designed to protect Israel's interests. Instead of asking Israel to end its WMD programs, the Iranians lamented, Western powers put diplomatic pressure on Arab governments to participate in international arms control instruments and accused regional countries such as Iran of harboring biological warfare ambitions, irrespective of the Islamic Republic's impeccable record in international arms control diplomacy. Iranian officials vehemently rejected all claims that their country was working on biological weapons and stressed, once again, that their government viewed all kinds of WMD as immoral. (Mashhadi 1994: 82–83; Leitenberg 1996: 12 and Kharrazi 1994: 127)

Iran argued that compared with the broader Middle Eastern arena, there were better chances for BTWC-related cooperation in the Persian Gulf because all the sub-regional states, save the United Arab Emirates, had acceded to the convention.[39] In November 1991, the Islamic Republic had suggested at the UN that the Gulf countries should, with the world organization's support, give consideration to gradual establishment of joint verification mechanisms with regard to WMD and thereby mitigate existing tensions in Iran–GCC relations. In August 1993, the Islamic Republic's foreign minister specified the Iranian proposal by calling for expert consultations to prepare arrangements for joint verification of the BTWC within the region. (CD/PV.659, 1993: 8–9 and A/C.1/46/PV.42, 1991: 42)

After the Iranians – in September 1994 – had introduced the concept of a "defensive security scheme" as the guiding principle or model for the Gulf region's future security architecture,[40] they declared the "formulation of complementary regional verification mechanisms" for the BTWC as an integral component of that model and as a regional contribution to the broader international debate on the treaty's verification system. A more ambitious element in the security scheme promoted by the Islamic Republic – whose representatives invited other Gulf governments to put forward diplomatic initiatives for the development of an indigenous security architecture in the region – was the creation of a WMDFZ in the Persian Gulf. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 13 and *The Islamic*

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[39] The United Arab Emirates remains the only Gulf Arab state that has not joined the BTWC. Saudi-Arabia and Kuwait ratified the treaty already in 1972, Qatar in 1975, whereas Bahrain's accession took place in October 1988 and Oman's in March 1992. As already noted above, Iraq did not join the BTWC until it was obliged to do so by the UN Security Council in June 1991. It should also be noted here that although Iranian authorities left the door open for Iraq's participation in joint Gulf security efforts, cooperation with an Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein was effectively ruled out by them as politically impossible (see above section 3.7.1).

Republic of Iran and Disarmament 1994: 269 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* 1994: 269–270)

Iran's conference positions

The discussion above of Islamic Iran's biological arms control operations testifies to a rapid evolution of Iranian diplomacy in a specific area of arms control. Prompted by the experiences and the end-result of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, as well as by the enhanced international efforts to improve the BTWC, the Islamic Republic formulated and presented the central features of its approach to biological arms control in the course of the early 1990s. Thus, by the time the states parties to the BTWC had gathered to a special conference in Geneva in September 1994 to examine the final report of VEREX, Iran's diplomatic stances on biological arms control were well known among the member states.

This was the case in particular in regard to the linkage made by the Islamic Republic between the establishment of a BTWC verification system and what Iranian officials referred to as the "full implementation" of the treaty's article X. Together with China and India, Iran submitted a joint working paper at the Special Conference in which the three countries listed a set of article X-related factors which they laid down as a condition for their diplomatic support for a favourable decision on the verification mechanism. In the first place, Iran, China, and India demanded that the states parties from the developing world should have an "ensured access to materials, equipment and technology in the field of biology and biotechnology for peaceful purposes" and that the development of the BTWC verification mechanism should be "combined with guarantees for full access" to biological materials, equipment, and technology. (BWC/SPCONF/1, 1994)

Secondly, Iran, China, and India condemned the application of export controls against countries that had acceded to the BTWC and demanded that there should be no such restrictions among the states parties. To underline this point, the Islamic Republic's Special Conference delegation castigated the Australia Group's 1993 decision to include biological agents and biological manufacturing equipment in its control list and said that the group's decision was in contravention with the BTWC. If the states parties were expected to "accede to the demands of verification," Iran

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[40] See section 3.7.1 pp. 179–180.

reiterated, all "arbitrary" export control arrangements had to be removed. Finally, the Islamic Republic, China, and India emphasized that the creation of a BTWC verification system should by no means hinder the development and promotion of cooperation between the states parties in the area of peaceful application of biotechnology. To the contrary, verification should be coupled with enhanced article X-related cooperation. (Ibid. and Nasseri 1994)

As far as the planned BTWC verification apparatus was concerned, the three governments made a call for the creation of a cost-effective mechanism. In the view of Iran, China, and India, the establishment of an independent verification agency, such as the OPCW, was not desirable because it would produce a large and expensive bureaucracy. Instead, the three governments suggested, the states parties should make better use of existing international organizations. The WHO, for example, was said to be in a good position to assume biological verification responsibilities. Even though the joint working paper presented by Iran, China, and India did not elaborate on the individual verification measures that had been discussed during the VEREX process, its emphasis on off-site measures revealed the preferences of the three governments so far as the nature of the BTWC's verification system was concerned.[41] (BWC/SPCONF/1, 1994 and Nasseri 1994)

At the 1994 Special Conference, the member states of the BTWC not only discussed the findings and the final report of VEREX, but also took a significant diplomatic step by establishing a BTWC Ad Hoc Group (AHG), open to all the states parties, "to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument." The AHG was mandated to carry out the following specific tasks: 1) to define terms and objective criteria, such as lists of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins, their threshold quantities, as well as equipment and types of activities, where relevant for specific measures designed to strengthen the BTWC; 2) to incorporate existing and additional enhanced confidence-building and transparency measures into the BTWC's verification regime; 3) to develop a system of measures to

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[41] The final report of VEREX had drawn three main conclusions. First, the report stated that potential verification measures could be useful in varying degrees in enhancing confidence that the states parties are committed to their BTWC obligations. Secondly, the report concluded that no single verification measure was capable of indisputably differentiating between permitted and prohibited biological activities, even if verification measures were seen in the report as capable of providing information of varying utility in strengthening the BTWC. Thirdly, the VEREX report noted that the implementation of

promote compliance with the BTWC, including, as appropriate, measures identified, examined, and evaluated in the VEREX report;[42] and 4) to delineate specific measures designed to ensure effective and full implementation of article X of the convention.[43] (BWC/SPCONF/1, 1994)

From the Islamic Republic's point of view, the mandate of the AHG seemed satisfactory, for the BTWC states parties' understanding that the aim of the AHG's work was to strengthen the treaty in a comprehensive manner – together with the specific reference to article X-related AHG activities – was of particular importance to the Iranians.[44] However, Iran's view of the AHG negotiations' prospects for success was not equally enthusiastic. In the Iranian opinion, there were a number of factors that continued to undermine international diplomatic efforts in the area of biological disarmament. These included the ambiguities regarding the major powers' military doctrines, the reservations concerning in-kind retaliation made to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the poor results of the BTWC's data exchange mechanism,[45] and finally, the security problems in the Middle East as well as the lack of outside interest in improving the security situation in the region. But still, Iranian officials expressed their satisfaction with the Special Conference's decision to establish the AHG and pointed out that the future protocol prepared by the group should be acceded to and observed by all the member states of the BTWC.[46] (Nasseri 1994 and A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 15)

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verification measures should not jeopardize sensitive commercial proprietary information and states' national security interests. (Kadlec et al. 1999: 102–103)

[42] The Special Conference stressed that the measures designed to promote compliance with the BTWC "should apply to all relevant facilities and activities, be reliable, cost effective, non-discriminatory and as non-intrusive as possible, consistent with the effective implementation of the system and should not lead to abuse" (BWC/SPCONF./1, 1994).

[43] In this connection, the Special Conference also noted that the provisions of the BTWC "should not be used to impose restrictions and/or limitations on the transfer for purposes consistent with the objectives and the provisions of the Convention of scientific knowledge, technology, equipment and materials" (ibid.).

[44] At the Special Conference, the Islamic Republic had argued that the mandate of the AHG should be as wide as possible so that the concerns of all member states would be taken into account in the group's work (Nasseri 1994).

[45] Referring to the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism, Iranian officials lamented that the information provided by the states parties since the 1991 review conference had been "general and selective" (ibid.). What they did not touch upon was the fact that the Islamic Republic itself had continued to refrain from participating in the data exchange. And as before, the Iranians had not given any reasons for their non-participation in the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism. It should be noted that, shortly before the Special Conference, the Islamic Republic had informed that it was in the process of collecting national data to be submitted to the states parties as soon as possible (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 14).

[46] Thus, the Iranians were of the opinion that if the states parties wanted to create a separate verification protocol for the BTWC, they could not treat it as a legally independent instrument. A verification protocol, the officials of the Islamic Republic asserted, would be an integral part of the BTWC and,

4.2.3 The Ad Hoc Group years, 1995–2001

The Ad Hoc Group of the states parties to the BTWC started its work in the beginning of 1995. On 4–6 January, it convened in Geneva for the inaugural procedural session with the participation of 49 countries, including Iran. The Islamic Republic took actively part in the group's work throughout the process. As characterized by one well-informed observer, of the some 40–50 states that regularly participated in the AHG talks of 1995–2001, Iran was among the 10–12 countries that formed the group's core (Dando 2000).

At the second meeting of the AHG in July 1995, the group's chairman appointed four so-called Friends of the Chair to assist him in the consultations and negotiations on the four issues in the AHG's mandate – that is, definition of terms and objective criteria, confidence-building and transparency measures, measures to promote compliance, and measures related to article X. The Friend of the Chair position concerning the definitions was allotted to the Islamic Republic and was taken over by Ali Akbar Muhammadi, the president of the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute. As far as the other AHG representatives of the Islamic Republic were concerned, they came, for the most part, from the Iranian foreign and defence ministries but also included medical and technical advisers from other relevant national agencies.

4.2.3.1 The Fourth Review Conference of the BTWC

Between January 1995 and mid-July 1997, as the members of the AHG were busy with preliminary elaboration of the elements of a protocol strengthening the BTWC, Iran's biological arms control operations took mostly place in other international fora, for example, at the Fourth Review Conference of the BTWC held in Geneva on 25 November–4 December 1996. The Islamic Republic's main input to the review conference deliberations was the submission of a proposal for the amendment of the BTWC through the insertion of the word 'use' in the title and article I of the convention. Continuing from where it had left off at the 1991 review conference, Iran maintained that the lack of an explicit treaty provision banning the use of biological weapons, together with the retaliation reservations made to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, provided a

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therefore, the member states should not be given the freedom to decide whether to accede to the protocol or not. (Nasseri 1994)

legal loophole for those who wished to challenge the notion that both the Geneva Protocol and the BTWC, as well as customary international law, already forbade the use of biological armaments. (Nasseri 1996: 2–3 and Zanders et al. 1997: 457)

Specifically, the representatives of the Islamic Republic raised the possibility that the countries that had joined the Geneva Protocol with retaliation reservations might argue that, in their case, only the first use of biological weapons was prohibited. States asserting that the use of biological armaments could be legitimate under certain circumstances, the Iranians warned, might try to support their claim by referring to article VIII of the BTWC which prescribes that nothing in the convention shall be interpreted as in any way limiting or detracting from the obligations assumed by any state under the Geneva Protocol.[47] (Nasseri 1996: 3–4)

Iran's treaty amendment proposal was supported by several conference members of the group of non-aligned countries, such as India, Pakistan and Mexico. Nonetheless, the majority of the states parties was not willing to back the Iranian request. Western governments and Russia, for example, argued that although not explicitly written down, the ban on use was already included in the BTWC. Therefore, there was no reason to open the convention for amendments and to question the treaty provisions that had functioned well for over two decades. Some delegations warned that since a treaty amendment would have to be individually ratified by each state party, if accepted, the Iranian-driven amendment could be ratified by some but ignored by others. In such an eventuality, those rejecting the amendment would appear to condone the use of biological armaments. (BWC/CONF.IV/9, 1996)

The delegates of the Islamic Republic responded to this legal argument by stating that it had its merits, for it might, indeed, take a long time for some states to ratify the amendment. Therefore, the Iranians opined, the states parties attending the review conference should make an unequivocal declaration in which they would express their unanimous view that the original text of the BTWC prohibited the use of biological weapons. After doing that, the Iranian delegates continued, the states parties could safely adopt the treaty amendment and wait for the subsequent ratifications to take place. Hoping that its amendment proposal would be accepted, and supported by a number of non-aligned countries, the Islamic Republic suggested that a special BTWC conference would be convened to deal with the issue. Yet, most review conference

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[47] At the 1996 review conference, the Iranians called on all the states that maintained reservations to the Geneva Protocol to withdraw them as quickly as possible (BWC/CONF.IV/9, 1996).

delegations were of the view that a reaffirmation in the conference's final declaration that the BTWC forbids the use of biological weapons would be the appropriate step for the time being. In the end, this opinion prevailed, and the Fourth Review Conference eventually reaffirmed that any use of biological weapons would involve a breach of the convention. This diplomatic move effectively foiled the Islamic Republic's further efforts in the matter. (Nasseri 1996: 5 and BWC/CONF.IV/9, 1996)

In the amendment proposal's shadow, the Islamic Republic's review conference delegates raised also other issues that were of relevance to the conference and to the international biological arms control debate in general. Underlining the importance of article X in the BTWC, they repeated the standard Iranian position according to which no interpretation of the treaty justified restrictions on the transfers of biological materials, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes between the states parties. The officials of the Islamic Republic demanded the conference participants to remove among themselves all existing restrictions on biological transfers and to embark upon multilateral negotiations, within the BTWC framework, with the aim of devising transfer guidelines not only in respect of the states parties but also vis-á-vis the countries that had not joined the convention. Moreover, the Iranians asserted that the BTWC obligated the states parties to do their utmost to promote cooperation between developed and developing countries in the field of biology and biotechnology. The increased threat of the spread of contagious diseases and infections, among others, was told to by the Iranians to make such cooperation an urgent necessity. (Nasseri 1996: 2, 5–6)

As far as other articles of the BTWC were concerned, the Islamic Republic's article VII-related request that the AHG would "discuss the detailed procedure for assistance in order to ensure that timely emergency assistance would be provided by the states parties if requested" was registered, in a slightly modified form, in the review conference's final declaration.[48] With regard to article V, which obligates the states parties to cooperate in solving treaty-related problems, the Iranians maintained that it provided "an appropriate framework for resolving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective, or in the application, of the provisions of the Convention." In addition,

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[48] Generally, Iranian representatives tried to avoid making linkages between the work of the Fourth Review Conference and that of the AHG. Although, in the Iranian opinion, one of the review conference's functions was to support the on-going AHG negotiations, the Islamic Republic pointed out that the conference "cannot be overshadowed and indeed stands well above those negotiations or any

they stressed that the states parties should refrain from taking unilateral action in resolving any concerns with regard to the implementation of the treaty. Finally, in respect of article VI, which contains the BTWC's complaint procedure, the Islamic Republic emphasized that even if the complaint mechanism centered around the UN Security Council, that fact should not prevent the states parties from collectively discussing and making decisions on cases of non-compliance and other violations of the BTWC. (BWC/CONF.IV/9, 1996 and Sims 2001: 60)

During the first phase of the AHG talks in 1995–1997, Iranian officials also kept on advancing their government's views on biological disarmament in the regional Middle Eastern setting. They called for the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East and noted that the regional states' participation in all major international arms control instruments, including the BTWC, was a prerequisite for such a zone. As before, the Iranians put the blame for the poor state of arms control in the Middle East on Israel. On the one hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, Israel's policies of "aggression, occupation and expansionism" undermined the cause of regional arms control. On the other hand, Israel's refusal to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and to join the NPT, the CWC, as well as the BTWC, the Iranians pointed out, constituted a fundamental obstacle to a WMD-free Middle East. According to Iran, the major powers' support of Israel and their "short-sighted and discriminatory" attempts to secure their dominance and interests in the Middle East further aggrevated the region's security problems. (A/50/PV.5, 1995: 30–31; A/C.1/50/PV.11, 1995: 13 and Sadeghi-Dolatabadi 1995: 142)

Once again, the political situation in the Gulf sub-region was told by the Iranians to offer better prospects for arms control. As a result, the officials of the Islamic Republic, who underscored their country's benevolent intentions and its commitment to international arms control arrangements, continued to call for Iranian–GCC security discussions and for the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Gulf which, the Iranians maintained, was needed, among others, because of the threat posed by Iraq and its WMD. Given the rudimentary nature of security collaboration in the Persian Gulf, the Islamic Republic's Gulf diplomacy only seldom detached the issue of biological weapons from the general Iranian discussion on WMD. The idea of regional verification cooperation in respect of the BTWC remained the only Iranian arms control initiative

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matter of significance that concerns the evaluation of the Convention, its improvement and strengthening in any form" (Nasseri 1996: 1).

that exclusively focused on biological armaments. (Zarif 1995: 120; Zarif 1996: 451–452 and Sadeghi-Dolatabadi 1995: 149)

4.2.3.2 Iran's argumentation in the AHG

Implementation of article X

Iran's diplomatic activities during the AHG deliberations focused first and foremost on issues related to article X of the BTWC. Together with their colleagues from other NAM states such as China, India, Pakistan, and Brazil, the officials of the Islamic Republic reminded their co-negotiators of their view that the efforts to strengthen the BTWC and to create a verification system for the treaty must be combined with promises to the Third World states parties of full access to biological technology and sciences. In return for committing themselves to the obligations of article I of the BTWC and for giving their political support to the planned verification mechanism, Iranian negotiators argued, Third World states had the right to ask advanced industrial countries to facilitate and promote the fullest possible exchange of biological materials, equipment, as well as relevant scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes between developed and developing nations. (Kharrazi 1998c; BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.149, 1997: 1 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.419, 2000: 2)

The Islamic Republic urged developed states to fulfill their responsibility to ensure "effective and full implementation" of the BTWC, among others, by concluding bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation agreements with developing countries in the area of disease prevention. Iran's AHG negotiators also called on advanced industrialized states to help developing nations to establish research institutes so that Third World countries would have sufficient infrastructural means to make advances in the application of biology and biotechnology. Beside rewarding those states that respected the BTWC and intended to adhere to the legally binding verification protocol under negotiation, the Iranians maintained, such measures would enable industrialized countries to ensure and control that the developing countries' biological activities would remain within what is permitted by international law. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.149, 1997: 2; A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 13 and Mashhadi 1999: 75)

Arguing that the future BTWC protocol should include explicit provisions that strike a balance between the disarmament and the development aspects of the BTWC, the

Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators strongly condemned the existing extra-conventional export controls that were applied against some treaty members. According to the Iranians, such restrictions violated the letter and spirit of the BTWC, and by weakening confidence between the states parties and thereby adversely affecting international security, they put the effective implementation of the convention as well as the planned protocol in jeopardy. In addition, Iranian officials specifically alluded to the dire consequences of export controls to their own country. Export controls were told by them to have hampered development efforts in Iran, among others, in the country's medical sector and especially in Iranian vaccination centers.[49]

The Islamic Republic's export control criticism was directed above all against the Australia Group. The Iranians were strongly of the opinion that the group had to be resolved immediately after the BTWC protocol's entry into force and after the treaty organization charged with the responsibility to implement the protocol was in place. Iran's AHG negotiators maintained that the establishment of the Australia Group during the Iran–Iraq war had been an understandable effort to fill an arms control vacuum, but that upon the entry into force of the BTWC protocol, the activities of the group would have no raison d'etre whatsoever. Instead of relying on extra-conventional export control mechanisms and ad hoc arrangements, the Iranians continued, the states parties should agree on "multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory and legally binding" transfer guidelines that would be included in and constitute an integral part of the BTWC protocol. (Soltanieh 2001a: 3; Kharrazi 1998c and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.452, 2001: 2)

Furthermore, Iran's AHG negotiators stressed that the decision on the transfer guidelines should lead to the harmonization of national export control policies. The Iranians called on all the states parties to review their existing export regulations in the field of biology, genetic engineering, microbiology, and other related areas in order to render them consistent with the objectives of the BTWC. The harmonization process was defined by the Iranians as a legally binding obligation that should arise from the future verification protocol. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.149, 1997: 1 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.452, 2001: 2)

As a concrete example of what the states parties could agree on, the representatives of the Islamic Republic alluded to the idea of end-user certificates that would replace

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[49] This paragraph draws upon A/C.1/52/PV.11 (1997: 20); BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.452 (2001: 2) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

existing extra-conventional transfer regulations upon the BTWC protocol's entry into force. Such certificates, the Iranians clarified, would be required from all transfer recipients and they would contain an assurance by the recipients that the items procured would be used for peaceful purposes only and that they would not be re-transferred to a third country without the original supplier's authorization. In addition, the certificates would state the types and the quantities of the received items, the purposes for which the items were obtained, as well as the names and the addresses of the end-users. As far as technology transfers between BTWC states parties and non-parties were concerned, the Islamic Republic called for a separate set of measures to cover those transactions. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.148, 1997: 1–2; Mashhadi 1999: 74 and Soltanieh 2001a: 3)

Like a number of other NAM countries, Iran was of the view that the BTWC-based multilateral export regulation arrangement it was advocating would have to include a mechanism to settle transfer-related disputes among the states parties. The details of such a mechanism were specified in an Iranian AHG working paper from August 2000 and in an AHG paper submitted by the Islamic Republic together with eight other NAM countries some three months later.[50] The main point made in the two papers was that if a state party was denied a biological transfer for a reason that it considered inconsistent with the provisions of the BTWC and article VII of the BTWC protocol's rolling text,[51] it would have the right to seek the annulment of the denial through certain procedures. The mechanism put forward by Iran's AHG negotiators and their NAM collegues gave priority to bilateral consultations between the party that had made the transfer request and the party that refused to carry out the transfer, but it also envisioned a situation where such consultations would not result in a settlement in the matter. In such a case, the complaining state would have the right to rely on a set of institutional steps which, if not bringing about a change in the other party's position, would ultimately lead to the imposition of punitive measures on that country. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.426, 2000: 1–3 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.432, 2000: 1–2)

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[50] The other NAM countries behind the November 2000 working paper were as follows: China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. For a comprehensive list of the working papers submitted to the AHG by the national delegations between January 1995 and December 2000, see Pearson (2000: 19). The number of working papers produced by the Iranian delegation during that period amounted to 14.

[51] Article VII of the rolling text was entitled "Scientific and Technological Exchange for Peaceful Purposes and Technical Cooperation." The first rolling text of the BTWC protocol was issued in June 1997. From July 1997 onwards, the rolling text formed the basis for AHG negotiations. For the structure of the rolling text, see Tóth (1997: 5).

In order to further secure developing countries' interests in the planned BTWC protocol, in March 1997 the Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators submitted a working paper which called for the establishment of a reporting system for the protocol that would obligate the states parties to make periodic declarations on the measures they had taken to implement the provisions of article X. The declarations would be examined in accordance with specific procedures outlined in the protocol, and after such examinations, recommendations regarding the implementation of article X would be made to the member states. Iranian representatives elaborated on the matter in another working paper in September 1997 in which they called for annual declarations that would cover all the measures taken by the states parties – individually or together with other countries or international organizations – in implementing article X. The Iranian paper also reserved the states parties the right to make declarations on any restrictions on the transfers of biological materials, equipment, and technology identified by them. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.149, 1997: 2 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.227, 1997: 1)

The issue of article X declarations was jointly discussed by the group of NAM countries at the 13th session of the AHG in January 1999. The working paper by the NAM delegations on the matter stated that the states parties would have to annually provide a general description of the measures they had taken to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of biological materials, equipment, as well as relevant scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes. In a similar fashion, the member states would have to provide general information on the measures taken to promote the development and application of scientific discoveries for disease prevention or other peaceful purposes. The NAM paper also called on the states parties to provide information on any other measures taken by them to implement article X of the BTWC as well as on the specific steps taken by them to review their existing national trade legislation and regulations. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.350, 1999: 1)

Moreover, Iran and other NAM countries called for the establishment of a Cooperation Committee that would act as one of the BTWC protocol's subsidiary organs. The NAM working paper of January 1999 stated that the general purpose of the committee would be to ensure that article X of the BTWC and article VII of the protocol were effectively and fully executed. The powers and the functions of the committee would include the review of the functioning of the voluntary fund that would be created to finance scientific and technological cooperation between the states parties. The

committee would also be responsible for advancing cooperation among the states parties in the exchange of biological materials, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes and for promoting the publication and distribution of relevant research data among them. In the NAM plan, the cooperation committee would submit an annual report to the Conference of the States Parties – the main decision-making body of the planned international agency charged with the task of overseeing the implementation of the BTWC protocol – which would contain the committee's proposals and recommendations on how to further improve the implementation of article X of the BTWC. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.349, 1999: 1)

Given that several Western countries were highly reluctant to give up their extra-conventional export control arrangements[52] and to accept the article X-related proposals made by the Islamic Republic and its AHG allies, at times, Iran's negotiators resorted to thinly veiled diplomatic threats in order to emphasize the centrality of article X-related issues to their government. Already prior to, as well as at the early stages of, the AHG deliberations, the Islamic Republic had warned that developed countries' insensitivity to developing countries' concerns and interests could prompt the latter to block the establishment of a verification system for the BTWC or, at least, induce them to stay outside the future verification protocol. (Nasseri 1995b: 242–243 and A/C.1/51/PV.13, 1996: 18)

The fact that the Islamic Republic was forced to resort to tough diplomatic language as late as in the summer of 2001 tellingly illustrated the durability of the conflicting positions on article X among the AHG delegations. At the 24th session of the AHG in July–August 2001,[53] Iranian representatives lamented that there still seemed to be confusion among some delegations about the group's mandate and continued to stress the necessity of comprehensive strengthening of the BTWC. Explicit assurances of effective and full implementation of article X, the Iranians declared, were a key negotiation objective for their country. As put by the Islamic Republic's main negotiator, his government "could not accept any measures or mechanism which deprive the States Parties to the future Protocol from the access to equipment, materials and technology for peaceful purposes." (Soltanieh 2001a: 1–3)

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[52] In September 1997, the chairman of the AHG summarized the views of such Western countries as follows: "[…] several industrialized countries regard export control regimes both now and in the future as being a necessary element to meet their obligations under article III of the BTWC and as an important ingredient of an integrated non-proliferation regime" (ibid.: 4).

The verification system

The other principal subject focused on by the representatives of the Islamic Republic during the AHG process was the planned verification system itself. Even though the Iranians persistently declared that the strengthening of the BTWC consisted of a set of individual diplomatic measures of which the creation of a verification system for the treaty was only one, they acknowledged the verification system's importance to the effectiveness of the BTWC and to the realization of the principle that all WMD, including biological armaments, should be eliminated. And even if Iran drew a close linkage between verification and comprehensive international implementation of article X of the BTWC, it was not among the Third World states parties to whom the security benefits of verification were of secondary interest. On the contrary, Iranian officials regularly referred to the verification system's importance and, accordingly, vowed to fully support the AHG's work on the matter. (Nasseri 1995b: 238; Kharrazi 1998c and CD/PV.812, 1999: 29)

In spite of Iran's general support for the creation of a BTWC verification system, however, the Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators made a number of demands pertaining to the details of that system. In the first place, they stressed that the system had to be "non-discriminatory." This demand entailed not only the requirement that all states parties to the BTWC protocol would have to be treated equally and objectively in connection with verification, but also that all the states parties would have to have the chance to take part in the decision-making on verification issues. In a related manner, Iran strongly opposed the view put forth in the AHG talks that the planned verification mechanism would consist of broadly defined guidelines and allow the inspectors in the field to make the decisions on verification details on the basis of the case and the circumstances in question. Instead, the Islamic Republic hoped to see a system with strict and detailed verification procedures that would be uniform for all, a system devoid of what the Iranians labelled as "ad hoc elements" and as the suspicious "UNSCOM mentality."[54]

Moreover, the Islamic Republic's AHG delegates pointed out that the verification system under negotiation should respect the states parties' national sovereignty and not

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[53] The July–August 2001 meeting was the last of the altogether 24 sessions held by the AHG since January 1995.

[54] This paragraph draws upon Vorobiev (1996: 3); Pearson (1997: 19) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

be "too intrusive." In particular, the Iranians underlined, BTWC verification should not compromise either the states parties' commercial proprietary information or their national security interests. According to the Islamic Republic, the protection of national security needs was more important because considerations pertaining to commercial proprietary information were primarily a concern of only a few advanced nations, whereas national security issues concerned all the states parties. In addition, Iranian representatives stressed that the BTWC and its verification protocol constituted a sufficient and the only legitimate international framework for addressing BTWC non-compliance issues. (Kharrazi 1998c; Soltanieh 2001a: 2 and A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 28)

Iran's views on how the BTWC protocol should regulate the investigation of disease outbreaks testified, for its part, to the Islamic Republic's effort to prevent BTWC verification from jeopardizing its national security. Thus, the conceptual differentiation made by the AHG negotiators of Iran – and other NAM countries as well – between natural and unusual outbreaks of disease was intended to safeguard the states parties' national sovereignty and military security. Due to the similarities between an epidemiological investigation of a natural disease outbreak and an investigation of biological weapons use, Iranian delegates wanted to ensure that epidemiological investigations would not be used as covers for foreign espionage. Iran argued that natural outbreaks of disease fell in the domain of public health and that the investigation and control of such cases was the exclusive responsibility of individual states – even if they sought international assistance to support their national efforts. No BTWC state party, Iranian officials added, should be obligated to prove that an outbreak of disease on its territory was of natural origin. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.262, 1998: 1, 3–4; Tóth 1997: 4 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.369, 1999: 1–2)

At the same time, however, the Islamic Republic and its AHG allies recognized that an unusual disease outbreak[55] could be an indication of biological weapons use. Therefore, they maintained, the parties to the BTWC protocol should have the right to request the investigation of such incidents if they had "legitimate non-compliance concerns." Yet the NAM delegations also pointed out that the states parties' right to request an investigation should be accompanied by certain obligations. In essence, they pointed out, the state party making the request should furnish the Executive Council of

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[55] In an AHG working paper jointly submitted by the NAM delegations in January 1998, an unusual outbreak of disease was generally defined as an "outbreak which is unexpected within the prevailing context for the host agent and environment parameters" (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.262, 1998: 2).

the planned BTWC agency with the reasons why it believed that the disease outbreak in question was not natural as well as to substantiate its claim that the outbreak was directly related to activities prohibited by the BTWC by providing the council with detailed evidence and other necessary information.[56] Unless the state party making the request fulfilled such requirements, the NAM delegations maintained, the Executive Council should ignore the request. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.262, 1998: 2, 4 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.369, 1999: 1–3)

The Islamic Republic's national security concerns became evident also in the way in which it approached the verification-related conceptual distinction made in the AHG talks between "visits" and "investigations."[57] Stressing that the BTWC's verification system should rely, first and foremost, on "visits," the Iranians – who mentioned random visits as a crucial component of an effective BTWC protocol – were of the opinion that that the declarations submitted to the BTWC agency by the states parties should form the backbone of the future verification activities of that organization.[58] If the various kinds of "visits" were not able to alleviate non-compliance suspicions, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted, the states parties should make every effort to resolve them among themselves. Only if such efforts failed, the Iranians added, should the member states make use of the mechanism of "investigations." In short, then, the Islamic Republic viewed "investigations" as a last resort to determine the facts pertaining to BTWC non-compliance concerns.[59]

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[56] The NAM delegations also stressed that the state party on whose territory – or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control – a BTWC non-compliance investigation would take place, should "have the right to provide information that indicates that the outbreak of disease is naturally occurring or otherwise unrelated to activities prohibited by the Convention" (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.369, 1999: 2).

[57] "Visits," as discussed in the AHG, referred to verification activities not involving a BTWC non-compliance concern. The various kinds of "visits" listed by the AHG fell into five categories: a) random visits to declared facilities to confirm the accuracy of the national declarations made to the BTWC agency; b) ambiguity-related visits to resolve declaration ambiguities; c) clarification visits to resolve any uncertainty in declarations; d) request visits made for the BTWC agency to help compile declarations; and e) voluntary visits. "Investigations," as discussed in the AHG, in turn, referred to inspections involving a BTWC non-compliance concern. They included two types of activities: field investigations – that is, verification activities in geographical areas where there had been a release of, or exposure of humans, animals, or plants, to biological agents or toxins that had given rise to a non-compliance concern – and facility investigations – inspections on facilities suspected of being engaged in prohibited activities. (Pearson 1997: 18)

[58] The declaration requirement basically meant that each BTWC state party would have to declare all relevant biological activities or facilities existing on its territory or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control, as specified in the BTWC protocol, to the treaty organization. Such declarations would consist of initial declarations – made by a state party after the protocol would enter into force for that state party – as well as of annual declarations.

[59] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002, and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.345 (1999: 3).

Other issues

While concentrating on article X and verification, Iranian AHG negotiators' argumentation included remarks on other BTWC-related questions as well. In particular, the Iranians pointed, once again, to the fact that the BTWC did not include a provision explicitly banning the use of biological weapons. In the Islamic Republic's view, AHG talks provided an excellent opportunity for the states parties to discuss the issue and to fill the existing treaty loophole by making the necessary text amendments to the planned additional protocol. Iranian officials acknowledged that the deterrence effect of the BTWC was such that it rendered biological warfare unlikely and that the 1996 review conference had concluded that the convention implicitly banned biological weapons use. Yet, the Iranians argued that in the final analysis, the situation had basically remained unchanged: the lack of an explicit prohibition continued to constitute a legal escape clause that was vulnerable to exploitation especially by those countries which continued to maintain reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. (CD/PV.753, 1997: 20)

In order to promote discussion on the prohibition issue in the AHG, the Iranian delegation submitted two working papers in which it called for text amendments either to the general provisions section of the BTWC verification protocol's rolling text or to its article I. Iran's paper of July 1999 called on the states parties to agree on an amendment stating that they would never under any circumstances use biological or toxin weapons. The second Iranian paper, introduced a year later in July 2000, in turn, proposed that the states parties would undertake "to exclude completely the possibility of the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins as weapons." Iran's efforts were supported by other NAM countries,[60] but in the end, Iran's AHG delegates had no choice but to concede that their diplomatic activities in the matter did not get enough support among the member states. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.394, 1999: 1 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.419, 2000: 1)

In the Iranian analysis, it was the United States that ultimately blocked their initiative in the AHG. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, the Americans opposed the inclusion of an explicit ban on biological armaments use to the BTWC protocol

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[60] See, for example, the final document of the XIII Ministerial Conference of the NAM held in Cartagena, Columbia, on 8–9 April 2000 which stated the following: "We reiterate our conviction that the use of biological weapons, in any way and under any circumstances, is effectively a violation of Article I of the [Biological and Toxin Weapons] Convention and we express the wish for this issue to be pursued further by the States Parties" (*NAM Ministerial Conference Document* 2000).

because such a provision would draw international attention to the United States' own use of a biological weapon in 1996. What the Iranians referred to was the allegation officially made by the government of Cuba in 1997 that, on 21 October 1996, an aeroplane registered to the U.S. State Department had sprayed an insect known as *Thrips Palmi* (palm thrips) over Cuba and caused a widespread infestation of the crop-killing pest in the western part of the country.[61]

During the AHG negotiations of 1995–2001, though mostly outside the actual AHG context, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to present their government's views on biological disarmament in the Middle East. As before, the Iranians lumped biological armaments together with other WMD and spoke of the need to rid the region of all kinds of WMD. A Middle Eastern WMDFZ remained the Islamic Republic's key declared arms control objective in the region. And again, Iran named Israel as the main obstacle to the realization of such a zone. Israel's militarism and its WMD, particularly nuclear weapons, the oft-repeated Iranian argument went, continued to function as the main cause for the massive proliferation of armaments in the region and for the lack of progress in regional arms control. (A/CN.10/PV.222, 1998: 17 and A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21)

Accordingly, the officials of the Islamic Republic called on Israel to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. The Islamic Republic also called on the regional governments to join all multilateral arms control instruments dealing with WMD, including the BTWC as well as the additional protocol still under negotiation in Geneva. Furthermore, Iranian authorities urged the major powers, particularly the United States, to end their support to Israel's WMD programs and to adopt a non-selective and non-discriminatory policy in the Middle East. (Sadeghi-Dolatabadi 1995: 142; A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 21 and A/C.1/52/PV.20, 1997: 16)

Iran maintained that due to their possession of WMD, Israel and Iraq were the most dangerous states in the region. For this reason, the Islamic Republic's AHG representatives demanded, both Israel and Iraq had to be among the states parties to the BTWC protocol upon that instrument's entry into force. As far as Iraq was concerned, the Iranians pointed out that even if they had no information about the details of Iraq's biological weapons program, it was clear that Iraq continued to pose a WMD threat to

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[61] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; *Spokesman statement* (2001) and Sims (2001: 37, 43). For the details of the *Thrips Palmi* case and the multilateral diplomatic process set in motion by the Cuban claim, which was characterized by the Iranians as valid and well-founded, see Sims (2001: 36–49).

their country. To support their argument, the officials of the Islamic Republic referred to Iraq's record of chemical warfare and noted that Iraq's accession to the BTWC in June 1991 had not stemmed from a sincere national conviction but from outside political pressure. Hence, the Iranians continued, any setbacks in the UN efforts through UNSCOM and UNMOVIC to eliminate Iraq's biological weapons and other WMD were alarming and necessitated a resolute response on the part of the world organization. A firm diplomatic course of action vis-à-vis Iraq was all the more important, Iranian officials claimed, because animals exposed to biological warfare agents had been detected in the border region between Iraq and Iran in the 1990s.[62]

The authorities of the Islamic Republic continued to argue that in contrast to the problematic Middle Eastern arena, there were immediate possibilities for inter-state cooperation in the area of biological disarmament in the Persian Gulf sub-region. The Iranians stressed their country's readiness to engage in a serious diplomatic dialogue with the Gulf Arab monarchies and named the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Gulf as the central Iranian arms control objective in the sub-region. They also reintroduced the Islamic Republic's proposal for joint regional verification activities to complement those planned for the BTWC.[63] (A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28 and Zarif 1996: 451)

As before, however, Iranian officials were forced to try to refute the accusations made, above all, by Iranian opponents of the Islamic regime in Tehran, the United States, as well as Israel that the Islamic Republic was actually pursuing a biological weapons program of its own.[64] Iranian authorities strongly rejected such claims as baseless and told that the purpose of the accusations was to defame the Islamic Republic by "capitalizing on the general abhorrence of the civilized world of these barbaric weapons." Also, in this connection, Iranian representatives restated their government's

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[62] This paragraph draws upon Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 512); author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002, and S/1998/165 (1998).

[63] Following the election of Muhammad Khatami as the fifth president of Islamic Iran in 1997, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation became coloured by the new Iranian administration's political language. As a consequence, the officials of the Islamic Republic – including president Khatami himself – emphasized that biological armaments and other WMD did not contribute to anyone's security. On the contrary, they maintained, such weapons posed a huge threat to international, regional, and national security and had to be banned and eliminated as called for by the notion of global security networking. (A/53/PV.8, 1998: 7; *Press Release No. 162,* 1998: 1 and CD/PV.812, 1999: 3)

[64] In early 1999, for example, the Mujahidin-i Khalq Organization (MKO) – an Iranian opposition group defined as a terrorist organization by the Islamic Republic – claimed that the Iranian government was developing biological weapons. The United States, in turn, accused the Islamic Republic of biological weapons ambitions, among others, in July 2001 by stating that "Iran is known to be producing biological weapons." Finally, the statement made by the spokesman of the Israeli government in April 2000 that Iran was arming itself with biological armaments and other WMD was one example of the Israeli conclusion

oft-declared position that, on the basis of its Islamic principles, the Islamic Republic considered biological armaments and other WMD inhumane and illegitimate.[65] (*Press Release No. 162,* 1998: 1; *Press Release No. 165,* 1999: 1 and *Spokesman statement* 2001)

Beside making the moral argument to defend their country against outside accusations, Iranian officials referred to the Islamic Republic's strict compliance with its BTWC obligations, to active Iranian participation in biological disarmament diplomacy, to its support to the planned BTWC verification system, as well as to Iran's efforts to advance biological disarmament in the regional Middle Eastern context, as evidence of the Islamic Republic's peaceful intentions and impeccable behaviour. Yet, Iranian representatives also pointed out that their country had every right, under the BTWC, to utilize the advances made in biology and biotechnology for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the Iranian people.[66]

4.2.4 The demise of the Ad Hoc Group and beyond

4.2.4.1 The twenty-fourth session of the AHG

The U.S. statement of July 2001

In July 2001, after six and half years of deliberations, the countries engaged in the AHG process convened in Geneva to the 24th session of the group. Most delegations attending the meeting had prepared themselves for a final round of negotiations which, it was widely hoped, would bring the AHG talks to a successful end. The aim was to conclude the additional protocol prior to the BTWC's Fifth Review Conference taking place in November 2001. Although controversial in the eyes of many participants, the so-called composite protocol text, presented by the chairman of the AHG to national delegations in March 2001, formed the basis for what was expected to be the final round of the negotiations. It based on the protocol's rolling text and on informal consultations

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of the Islamic Republic's military policies. (*Press Release No. 165,* 1999: 1; *Dow Jones,* 27 July 2001, and *The Jerusalem Post,* 5 April 2000)

[65] In January 2000, in an interview with the Al-Jazeera television network, the former Iranian president Rafsanjani said that the Islamic Republic would never want to possess and use weapons whose victims would include innocent civilians (<https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/sipa/GULF2000>).

[66] This paragraph draws upon *Press Release No. 162* (1998: 1); *Press Release No. 165* (1999: 1) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

held by the chairman with national representatives in order to find compromise solutions to issues that still divided the AHG delegations.[67]

On the eve of the 24th session, thus, most national delegations were prepared to make the final effort to defend their negotiation objectives as well as to make the concessions needed to have the BTWC protocol in place. In the end, however, the participants of the 24th session never reached this stage, for on 25 July, the third day of the session, the United States informed that it was withdrawing its support for the protocol.[68] The Americans, whose statement constituted a major disappointment to the great majority of the delegations,[69] gave three reasons for their rejection of the protocol. First, in the opinion of the United States, the protocol was not strong or efficient enough to detect secret proliferation of biological weapons. Secondly, the Americans claimed, the protocol unacceptably threatened commercial proprietary information. Finally, the United States viewed the protocol as a hazard to its national programs to defend against biological warfare. (Wheelis and Dando 2003)

The U.S. rejection of the verification protocol marked a dramatic end to an ambiguous American approach to the AHG process. Throughout 1995–2001, the United States' AHG diplomacy had been overshadowed by domestic bureaucratic politics which had prevented the U.S. delegates from significantly contributing to the protocol negotiations. The fact that the U.S. statement of July 2001 was made by an administration openly critical of multilateral diplomatic efforts in the area arms control made the American announcement less surprising.[70] Indeed, there had already been prior signs of the Bush administration's disinterest in the AHG process before the fateful 24th session. For example, in connection with AHG discussions on the composite text, the American delegates had portrayed the text as too weak and as a threat not only to national security and commercial proprietary information but also to the export controls of the Australia Group. Whatever the ultimate explanation for the U.S. decision to reject the protocol,[71] the July 2001 statement effectively watered down the AHG

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[67] For a comparison between the composite and the rolling text, see Pearson (2001b: 20–30).

[68] The United States stated that it was "unable to support the current text, even with changes, as an appropriate outcome of the Ad Hoc Group efforts" (Pearson 2001c: 6).

[69] For the AHG delegations' reactions to the U.S. announcement, see Pearson (2001d: 19–20).

[70] For statements made against the planned BTWC protocol by the administration of president George W. Bush, see Pearson (2001c: 6) and *Dow Jones* (27 July 2001).

[71] In addition to the official reasons given by the United States to justify its rejection of the protocol, other factors accounting for the American decision have been put forth by observers. Wheelis and Dando (2003), for example, argue that the decision may have resulted, above all, from the U.S. desire to continue its secret, offensively oriented biological defence programs and to actually expand them.

process, for few countries were expected to join the protocol without American participation. (Rosenberg 2001: 1–2)

The rejection of the multilateral diplomatic process on the BTWC protocol by the archenemy of the Islamic Republic prompted a strong response from Iranian representatives. Expressing what he referred to as his government's "total disappointment," the Islamic Republic's main AHG negotiator portrayed the U.S. questioning of the AHG talks' relevance as "totally unjustified." Beside challenging the content of the U.S. statement of July 2001 and stressing the importance of the multilateral negotiations in Geneva, the Islamic Republic criticized American diplomacy in the AHG. Throughout the AHG years, Iranian officials claimed, the United States had sought to obstruct the protocol negotiations by "creating obstacles to consensus" and by imposing its stances on the rolling text. Then, after years of negotiations, the Iranians continued, the United States, by discrediting the protocol, suddenly "ignored all rules of international negotiations" and delivered a major blow to those who had made major diplomatic sacrifices to make that instrument a reality. Disheartened by the U.S. announcement, Iran suggested that the final document of the AHG's 24th session would explicitly record that the United States "killed the Protocol," or, at least, include the U.S. statement of July 2001 as an appendix. Neither Iranian proposal was ultimately accepted.[72]

The authorities of the Islamic Republic discussed the U.S. rejection of the BTWC protocol outside the actual AHG context, too. In late July 2001, for example, they responded to a statement made by the White House that if a country like Iran, running an active biological weapons program, was interested in joining the BTWC protocol, there had to be something fundamentally wrong with that document. The foreign ministry of the Islamic Republic portrayed the allegation made by the Bush administration as "desperate and unfounded" and claimed that they were part of the American effort to justify their decision to block the finalization of the protocol. Subsequently, Iranian authorities regretted that U.S. diplomacy had prevented the creation of the planned BTWC agency, for such an organization, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, would have provided Iran and other states baselessly accused

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[72] This paragraph draws upon Soltanieh (2001b: 1–2) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002. It should be noted that the efforts by Iran and some other AHG delegations to have the United States reprimanded for its rejection of the protocol resulted in a diplomatic quarrel ultimately leading to the collapse of the AHG's 24th session without the adoption of a final document (Feakes and Littlewood 2002: 164).

of biological weapons development with a multilateral forum where to defend themselves and to prove their peaceful intentions.[73]

In addition to casting a shadow over international disarmament efforts, Iranian representatives maintained, the U.S. rejection of the BTWC protocol had major regional repercussions as well, particularly in conflict-ridden regions such as the Middle East. Thanks to the Bush administration's decision, they pointed out, Iraq and especially Israel were able to continue their biological weapons programs without any serious international obstacles. And as a result of U.S. diplomacy, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued, diplomatic efforts for the creation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East experienced a further setback.[74]

Iran and the composite protocol text

The sudden and dramatic turn in the AHG process resulting from U.S. diplomacy blurred the fact that by the time the AHG's 24th session had begun on 23 July 2001, there had still been many outstanding issues standing in the way of a consensus needed for the creation of the BTWC protocol. For one thing, there were a number of delegations that viewed the composite text of the chairman as ignoring their fundamental negotiation positions. Iran was among those countries. Fearing that the chairman's text would be founded on diplomatic compromises detrimental to the interests of the Islamic Republic, Iranian officials had already stated, at the AHG's 22nd session in February 2001, that the introduction of a text parallel to the rolling text would not help the talks but only "endanger the friendly and cooperative atmosphere of the negotiations." (Pearson 2001a: 20 and *CBW Conventions Bulletin*, June 2001)

At the 23rd AHG session in April–May 2001, after the chairman's text had been presented to national delegations, the Islamic Republic had continued to question the need for such a text. Together with six other NAM countries – China, Cuba, Indonesia, Libya, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – Iran had submitted a working paper which underscored the role of the rolling text as the basis for further AHG talks and called upon other delegations to return to negotiations on the basis of that document. In addition to opposing the general idea of a composite protocol text, the representatives of the Islamic

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[73] This paragraph draws upon *Dow Jones* (27 July 2001); *Spokesman statement* (2001) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.
[74] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

Republic had also touched upon the individual points of the chairman's text which, the Iranians had said, made the document unacceptable to the Iranian government. In essence, the officials of the Islamic Republic had maintained that the composite text did not strike an acceptable balance between the disarmament and development aspects of the planned protocol. In their view, the chairman's text had groundlessly emphasized the former.[75] (*Report from Geneva* 2001: 2–3 and BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.451, 2001: 1)

The main Iranian concern over the composite protocol text was that it sidelined the developing countries' strong opposition to extra-BTWC export controls. Even though the chairman's text had taken into account many of the article-X related issues raised by the Iranians and other NAM delegations,[76] it did not refer to the abolition of extra-conventional export controls as demanded by them. Dissatisfied with the situation, the representatives of the Islamic Republic made a final effort to advance their position in the matter and stressed that Iranian participation in the planned protocol was critically determined by how the issue of export controls would ultimately be dealt with. (Soltanieh 2001a: 2–3 and Soltanieh 2001b: 2)

The provisions on BTWC protocol's entry into force constituted the other principal cause for Iran's dissatisfaction with the chairman's text. According to paragraph 1 of the composite text's article 27, the protocol "shall enter into force 180 days after the deposit of instruments of ratification by 65 States, which shall include seven States from Africa, four States from East Asia and the Pacific, four States from Eastern Europe, six States from Latin America and the Caribbean, nine States from among Western European and other States, and three States from West and South Asia, but not earlier than two years after its opening for signature."

The Islamic Republic argued against the composite text formulation by stating that the protocol's entry into force had to depend on the participation in the instrument of all the countries with advanced biological and biotechnological sectors.[77] Hence, the

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[75] In a working paper from 4 May 2001, the NAM delegations had jointly stressed the "great importance" of comprehensive strengthening of the BTWC (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.451, 2001: 1).

[76] For example, article 14 of the composite protocol text – entitled "Scientific and Technological Exchange for Peaceful Purposes and Technical Co-operation" – promoted international cooperation in the area of disease prevention, obligated the states parties to submit annual declarations on the implementation of the provisions of article X of the BTWC, as well as established the Cooperation Committee that the NAM states had called for.

[77] As put by the Islamic Republic's AHG delegation: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that if the Protocol enters into force, while the advanced countries in the field of biology and biotechnology do not adhere to it, the Protocol would not be more than a piece of paper and all valuable efforts made during the past years will be wasted" (Soltanieh 2001a: 2).

Iranians maintained that a redrafted article 27 of the composite text should read as follows: "This Protocol shall enter into force 180 days after the deposit of instruments of ratification by 50 States having advanced biological capabilities and technologies [...] but not earlier than two years after its opening for signature." In order to answer the question how such advanced states would be defined or identified, Iran's AHG delegates referred to the information provided by the WHO and the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism as reliable and sufficient sources for the listing of those states. (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.454, 2001: 1–2)

Iranian officials gave two main reasons for their interest in altered entry into force provisions for the protocol. On the one hand, they noted that the adoption of the advanced state criterion would contribute to the universality and effectiveness of the BTWC and its protocol. On the other hand, and more importantly, the Iranians said that the criterion would safeguard the Islamic Republic's and other countries' national security interests. Being located in the sensitive region of the Middle East where some countries had a free hand to work on biological weapons and other WMD, Iranian representatives asserted, the Islamic Republic had a major interest in making sure that Israel and Iraq would become parties to the BTWC protocol and subject to its verification system right from the beginning. Even if the application of the advanced state criterion might prolong the protocol's entry into force, the Iranian argument went, it would be better to have a universal and an effective protocol than to allow proliferators to opt out of the instrument.[78]

In the light of Iran's criticism of the composite text, it can be asked whether the Islamic Republic would have joined the protocol had the United States not decided to stall the AHG process. There are many reasons to believe that the answer would have been yes. To begin with, at the 24th session of the AHG, the Islamic Republic signalled that it had adopted a softer attitude towards the chairman's text. Instead of challenging the concept of a composite text, the Iranian delegation, borrowing the characterization made by the chairman of the AHG, now described the text as a "common denominator, not making everyone happy, but a ground for the compromise." The threshold for the Iranian negotiators to accept the idea of a chairman's text was significantly lowered by

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[78] This paragraph draws upon BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.454 (2001: 1–2); Soltanieh (2001a: 2) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

the fact that that text had always been firmly based on the rolling text whose importance had constantly been underscored by the Iranians.[79]

As for the content of the chairman's text, Iran's AHG delegation informed the 24th session that it would be ready to accept the text if it was subjected to "minor changes."[80] At the end of the day, what the Iranians – who had regularly pointed to their diplomatic flexibility in the AHG talks – wanted to do was to push through their position on the question of export controls. As subsequently admitted by Iranian officials, neither the question of the protocol's entry into force nor any other issue in the composite text would have been critical enough to prevent the Islamic Republic from accepting the document. Hence, even if observers of the AHG negotiations and Iranian officials themselves had stressed during the AHG talks that Iran's and other NAM countries' acceptance of the BTWC protocol would require greater diplomatic concessions on the part of other delegations than was the case in connection with the CWC negotiations of the early 1990s, it is difficult to envision that the Iranians would have ultimately decided to stay outside the protocol and the international agency created by it.[81]

This conclusion is supported by a number of factors. For example, Iran had a direct security interest in diplomatic efforts aimed at strengthening the international norm against biological weapons and in the establishment of a verification mechanism operated by a multilateral decision-making machinery. Furthermore, after the U.S. rejection of the AHG process, the officials of the Islamic Republic went so far as to imply that their government's acceptance of the composite protocol text would not have been dependent even on the end-result of the AHG talks on export controls. Of course, such a claim provided Iranian authorities with an argumentative tool to blame the United States for "killing" the AHG process and for dangerously undermining international efforts in biological disarmament. In an identical manner, many of the Islamic Republic's AHG allies used the U.S. decision to reject the AHG process as a

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[79] This paragraph draws upon Soltanieh (2001a: 1–2) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002. According to Pearson et al. (2001: 3), over 99% of the composite text's language was identical to that of the rolling text.

[80] The Iranian delegates pointed out that "nobody could, at this juncture, accept any drastic change" in the rolling or the composite text (Soltanieh 2001a: 2).

[81] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; Soltanieh (2001a: 1) and Tóth (1997: 4).

means to cover the fact that their own policies had significantly slowed down the progress made in the 1995–2001 negotiations.[82]

When hypothesizing about what Iran's final position on the composite protocol text would have been, one should also take into account the fact that by staying out of the protocol, the Islamic Republic would have lost an access to a legal and an institutional framework within which, as in the case of the CWC and the OPCW, it could have advanced its diplomatic views on issues related to biological transfers and to technological and scientific cooperation. Similarly, one should pay attention to the preparations already made by Iranian authorities for a protocol membership. By the time of the AHG's 24th session, Iran had set up its interim national authority and agreed upon the necessary BTWC-related division of labour between the country's governmental agencies. In addition to training its bureaucrats and customs officials to implement the national obligations arising from the BTWC protocol, the Islamic Republic had integrated relevant Iranian industries into such preparatory work. Joint meetings between government officials and industry representatives, the national trial visit – in AHG parlance, a random visit – carried out at the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute in December 1998, together with the development of special visa practices for international BTWC inspectors, served as further examples of the steps Iran had taken to prepare itself for the protocol era.[83]

According to the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic, the representatives of Iran's armed forces had been intimately involved in the discussions on the Islamic Republic's approach to the BTWC protocol. In the light of the controversies that had erupted within the Islamic Republic's power elite in connection with the CWC, however, it is very likely that significant sections of the Islamic Republic's armed forces were against Iranian participation in yet another disarmament instrument. Even if Iranian officials – by asserting that the case of the BTWC protocol did not resemble that of the CWC because Iran, a member of the BTWC since 1973, did not need to make the fundamental national decision of whether to join a completely new arms control treaty or not – either totally rejected such a conclusion or maintained that the Islamic Republic's decision-making machinery, including the Supreme National Security

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[82] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (A) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Feakes and Littlewood (2002: 163, 170–171).

Council, allowed dissenting political actors to air their concerns in the national policy-making process, it seems safe to conclude that intra-elite Iranian criticism of the BTWC protocol largely consisted of the same argumentative elements that had been put forth with regard to the CWC. Thus, for Iran's military and civilian critics of the protocol – who were concerned, among others, over the Islamic Republic's freedom of choice in the area of military policy as well as over the WMD threats faced by the Islamic Republic, and who were highly suspicious of major power policies and of the BTWC's concrete benefits –, the U.S. rejection of the AHG process amounted to a welcome diplomatic shift which gave them ammunition in the intra-elite political battle over the BTWC protocol.[84]

4.2.4.2 The Fifth Review Conference of the BTWC: the November–December 2001 session

The fate of the AHG

After the U.S. rejection of the BTWC protocol in July 2001, the countries that had taken part in the protocol negotiations had basically three choices to make regarding the future of the AHG process: either to abandon it, to postpone further negotiations on the protocol for a certain period of time, or to go ahead with them by building on the diplomatic results achieved up to that point. The Iranians, who had always stressed the importance of advanced industrialized states' participation in the planned protocol, opted for the third option and expressed their readiness to continue the AHG process without the Americans.

The Iranian delegation taking part in the Fifth Review Conference of the BTWC,[85] convening in Geneva between 19 November and 7 December 2001, some three months after the AHG's 24th session, elaborated on the Islamic Republic's position on the future

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[83] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.345 (1999: 1–4) and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (A) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

[84] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002; author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (A) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and Jones (1998: 48).

[85] At the conference, the Islamic Republic had, once again, a large delegation taking part in multilateral deliberations on biological disarmament. The Iranian delegation consisted of representatives from the country's foreign and defence ministries as well as from the Ministry of Jihad and Agriculture, the Technology Cooperation Office, the Razi Vaccine and Serum Institute, and the Institut Pasteur of Iran. (BWC/CONF.V/INF.3, 2001: 16–17)

of the AHG process. According to the Iranian delegates, their country viewed the AHG's mandate as still being valid and called upon the states parties of the BTWC to restart their negotiations in order to finalize the additional protocol. The protocol talks, the Iranians suggested, should continue after the Fifth Review Conference and could be concluded within a time period of one year. In a review conference working paper introduced by the Islamic Republic on 27 November 2001, the Iranian delegates asked the conference to reaffirm in its final declaration "that the multilateral negotiations on a legally binding instrument shall be concluded and the text of such instrument be adopted by a Special Conference prior to the Sixth Review Conference."[86] (Soltanieh 2001c: 2; Soltanieh 2001e: 1, 3 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 6)

Iranian representatives were strongly against the idea that the AHG negotiations would be abandoned or substituted by a new diplomatic process. In the opinion of the Islamic Republic, there were no diplomatic alternatives to the AHG and the planned protocol that were capable of strengthening the BTWC and meeting the objectives spelled out in the Special Conference mandate of 1994. No other diplomatic avenue, Iranian authorities stressed, was acceptable to the Islamic Republic at this juncture. In fact, it was "humiliating" and "insulting," the Iranians added, to suggest that years of hard collective work in the AHG had been meaningless. (Soltanieh 2001c: 2–3 and Soltanieh 2001e: 3)

In order to underscore the importance of the AHG process to their country, Iran's review conference delagates not only pointed to the uniqueness of that process as well as to the planned BTWC protocol's central role in international efforts against biological weapons, but also resorted to tough diplomatic language which linked Iran's behaviour at the review conference to a decision on the AHG's future. If no plan was put in place for the continuation of the AHG negotiations, the Iranians threatened, their country might not be able join the consensus on a final conference declaration. "We want a successful conference," the Iranian delegation declared, "but not at any price." (Ibid.)

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[86] Iran's diplomatic commitment to the AHG process was shared by other NAM delegations. In a joint review conference working paper of 26 November 2001, the NAM delegations asked the conference to state "that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, as agreed by the Special Conference in 1994, remains valid and determines any future work of the Ad Hoc Group." In addition, the NAM paper asked the review conference to call on the states parties to "restart and continue the work of the Ad Hoc Group [...]." (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.13, 2001: 1)

Strongly opposed to the ideas circulating in the fifth review conference that spoke of future strengthening of the BTWC without the AHG,[87] the officials of the Islamic Republic were bewildered by the statement made by the United States in the final hours of the conference on 7 December. In that statement, the United States called for the establishment of a diplomatic process that would replace the AHG talks and consist, first, of annual meetings held by the states parties to review the implementation of the measures adopted at the Fifth Review Conference, and secondly, of supplementary expert meetings that would focus on considering and elaborating measures to strengthen the convention. The U.S. initiative, which also called for an explicit termination of the AHG's mandate, was unacceptable not only to the Iranians but to other conference delegations as well. In the wake of the last-minute diplomatic manoeuvring by the United States, the Fifth Review Conference was ultimately suspended. In order to have enough time to find a way out of the diplomatic deadlock created by the controversial last-minute U.S. initiative, the conference participants decided to reconvene in Geneva in November 2002, after a 'cooling-off' period of one year. (Rissanen 2002 and Feakes and Littlewood 2002: 169–170)

The issue of non-compliance

Beside being in fundamental conflict with the Iranian stand on the future of the AHG, the U.S. diplomacy at the Fifth Review Conference provoked Iranian authorities also by placing strong emphasis on the issue of BTWC non-compliance. The Americans used their opening statement at the conference to publicly accuse four BTWC states parties – Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Libya – of operating clandestine biological weapons programs.[88] The United States called on those countries to immediately terminate their arms programs and to fully comply with the provisions of the BTWC. Alluding to the planned BTWC protocol, the U.S delegation also noted that their government would "not enter into agreements that allow rogue states or others to develop and deploy biological weapons." (Rissanen 2002 and Feakes and Littlewood 2002: 167)

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[87] For a discussion of the various scenarios put forth at the Fifth Review Conference regarding what steps the states parties could take to strengthen the BTWC after the review conference's end and without the planned additional protocol, see Rissanen (2002).

[88] The U.S. statement also named Syria, which has signed the BTWC but not acceded to it, as well as Sudan, a non-state party, as countries that were pursuing biological weapons.

Following the U.S. statement, Iran exercised its right of reply to refute the allegation that it was pursuing biological weapons and not respecting its obligations under the BTWC. The Islamic Republic characterized the accusation made by the U.S. delegation as baseless and categorically rejected them. According to the Iranian delegates, their country's commitment to all multilateral arms control treaties related to WMD, its full cooperation with international agencies engaged in disarmament, as well as its active role in the AHG process testified, for their part, to Iran's peaceful intentions and its respect of international law. To strengthen their defence, the Iranians also pointed out that their country had participated in the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism by providing information about its biological activities to the UN. Having taken part in the mechanism for the first time in 1998 and then again in 1999,[89] Iranian representatives were now able to refer to such participation as proof of the Islamic Republic's impeccable record in implementing the BTWC. (Soltanieh 2001d: 1)

Offended by the U.S. accusation, Iranian officials warned the Americans of the consequences of their "aggressive" diplomacy. False allegations by one BTWC state party against another, they argued, only caused confrontation between the review conference delegations and might result in the total failure of the conference. Thus, for the second time, the Islamic Republic pointed to its ability to block the adoption of a final document in order to support its conference diplomacy. In addition to making their thinly veiled threat, Iranian delegates launched a verbal counterattack against the Americans by stating that, in fact, it was the U.S. government that had violated the BTWC. On the one hand, the Iranians accused the United States of having shipped "deadly biological agents" to Israel as well as to its other allies despite those countries' disregard for international disarmament treaties.[90]

On the other hand, the representatives of the Islamic Republic accused the United States of "research and development in the area of biological weapons" by alluding to a recent news report published by the *The New York Times*. The article mentioned by the Iranians had revealed in early September 2001 that the U.S. government had lately undertaken secret research into biological weapons. The U.S. research activities had

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[89] The reports handed over to the UN by Iran in September 1998 and October 1999 included information concerning the confidence-building measures A, B, and G. The Islamic Republic did not provide any reports to the UN in 2000 and 2001, but participated in the confidence-building mechanism again in 2002. (DDA/BWC/1998/CBM/Add.1, 1998: 45–65; DDA/BWC/1999/CBM/Add. 1, 1999: 64–75 and BWC/CONF.VI/INF.3, 2006: 32)

[90] This paragraph draws upon Soltanieh (2001d: 1) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

reportedly begun under president Clinton and been embraced by the successor administration of president George W. Bush. According to *The New York Times*, the United States had completed two research projects during the Clinton administration, and a third secret program was waiting for the Bush administration's approval.[91] (Soltanieh 2001d: 1 and *IHT*, 5 September 2001)

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic counterattack against the Americans included vehement criticism of the Bush administration's diplomacy in general. In addition to condemning the United States for having prevented the AHG from fulfilling its 1994 mandate and for substituting a "unilateral approach" for the BTWC protocol, Iranian authorities referred to other U.S. activities as further evidence of that country's "dangerous mentality." In the Iranian analysis, the U.S. plans for a national missile defence (NMD) system, its diplomatic efforts to have the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty revised, its non-accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the Bush administration's rejection of the Kyoto Protocol aimed at tackling global climate change illustrated that the Americans undermined international peace and security and obstructed multilateral diplomatic cooperation.[92]

The review of the operation of the BTWC

The Islamic Republic's response to the U.S. diplomacy extended also to the article-by-article review of the BTWC's operation conducted by the participants of the Fifth Review Conference. Accordingly, when discussing article V of the BTWC, dealing with treaty-related problem solving, Iranian delegates not only stated that the existing provisions provided an appropriate framework for resolving any problems that might arise between the states parties, but also asked the member states "to refrain from unilateral and discriminatory action in resolving any concerns with regard to the implementation of the Convention." Similarly, in connection with article VI, which contains the BTWC's complaint procedure, Iran wanted the conference to call on the

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[91] The first secret project completed by the United States had concerned the building and testing of a Soviet-designed anthrax bomb which the CIA feared to be available on the international market. The Clinton administration's second project had focused on the construction of a small biological agent production facility from commercially available materials. The third project mentioned by *The New York Times*, which was subsequently given a go-ahead by the Bush administration, involved the reproduction of a genetically modified antrax organism originally produced by Russian scientists in the mid-1990s. (*IHT*, 5 September 2001 and Feakes and Littlewood 2002: 165)

[92] This paragraph draws upon Soltanieh (2001d: 1) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

states parties to refrain from baseless non-compliance accusations against each other. The representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that any complaint of non-compliance should include factual evidence confirming the validity of the complaint and pointed out that diplomatic deliberations on any alleged breach of the BTWC should be conducted within the framework of the additional protocol. (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 3)

Iranian representatives' review of the other clauses of the BTWC focused on themes that had traditionally been highlighted by their government. As far as the universality of the convention was concerned, the Iranians underscored the importance of the treaty's universality to international and regional security, expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that there were still countries with advanced biological and biotechnological sectors that had not joined the convention, and called on the remaining non-states parties to accede to the instrument as soon as possible. Also, the officials of the Islamic Republic appealed to the member states to use the bilateral and multilateral diplomatic means in their possession to persuade the outsiders to accede to the BTWC as well as expressed their hope that the objective of treaty universality would be taken seriously by the states parties. Referring to the case of the CWC, the Iranians claimed that their government's decision to ratify the chemical treaty in 1997 had been made with the expectation, based on assurances given to the president of the Islamic Republic "by some heads of states of friendly industrialized states," that other countries, especially in the sensitive Middle Eastern region, would follow Iran's example. As those assurances never materialized, the Iranians declared, this time the states parties should actively strive for treaty universality so that Iran's "bitter experience" would not repeat itself in the context of the BTWC.[93] (Soltanieh 2001c: 3; BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.10, 2001: 1 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 6)

The second major BTWC-related issue raised by the Islamic Republic at the Fifth Review Conference was the Iranian-promoted treaty provision that would explicitly ban the use of biological armaments. Again, Iranian officials reminded the states parties of the fact that the BTWC did not include an explicit ban on biological weapons use and noted that such a legal loophole could be exploited by the countries maintaining

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[93] Iran's review conference comments on article IX of the BTWC, which speaks of the goal of chemical disarmament, included a condemnation of the U.S. national exemptions – adopted in 1997 – in the implementation of the CWC. Thus, the Islamic Republic asked the Fifth Review Conference to call on the states parties to the CWC not to enact national legislation that is in conflict with the objectives and

retaliation reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. And as before, they called on the states parties to deal with the issue "in the most urgent manner." According to Iran, there were two ways to take care of the matter: either to insert the word "use" in the title and article I of the BTWC or to ask the countries maintaining retaliation reservations to the Geneva Protocol to withdraw them. Iran's review conference delegation preferred the first option and produced text drafts – both individually and together with other NAM delegations – for that purpose. (Soltanieh 2001c: 4; BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 1–2, 6 and BWC/CONF.V/COW.WP.11, 2001: 1)

Remembering the poor success of their previous text amendment efforts, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic sought to simultaneously promote the second option as well. They urged all the countries that still maintained reservations to the Geneva Protocol to withdraw them and called on the review conference to conclude that the Geneva Protocol reservations concerning in-kind retaliation were "totally incompatible" with article I of the BTWC. Although the Iranian delegation was realistic enough to acknowledge that the issue of use was unsolvable in the short term, it nevertheless stressed that their country would continue to resolutely raise the matter in the future. Consequently, Iranian delegates asked the conference to reaffirm that the Islamic Republic's proposal for the amendment of the title and article I of the BTWC to explicitly include the prohibition of biological weapons use should be considered by the states parties at the next, sixth BTWC review conference. (Soltanieh 2001c: 4; BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 5–6 and BWC/CONF.V/DC/WP.1, 2001: 1)

The third major issue addressed by the Iranian delegation concerned with the implementation of article X. Together with their NAM allies, Iran's representatives emphasized that a "non-discriminatory and balanced" approach to the BTWC, fully taking into account the provisions of article X, was a prerequisite for the treaty's effective implementation. Also, they pointed out that the work done in the AHG on article X should constitute the basis for future efforts to strengthen that treaty provision. Leaning on its AHG argumentation, thus, the Islamic Republic condemned, once again, the existence of extra-BTWC export controls, especially those of the Australia Group, and noted that the states parties had a legal obligation to refrain from imposing restrictions or limitations on transfers between the member states of biological materials, technology, equipment, and research information for peaceful purposes. Due

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provisions of that treaty, as well as to immediately withdraw such legislation if it has already been approved. (Soltanieh 2001d: 1 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 6)

to the "unilateral, discriminatory and self-imposed" restrictions of the Australia Group, the Iranians claimed, developing countries' efforts in the area of biology and biotechnology had faced serious barriers and their economies had suffered from significant financial damages. (Soltanieh 2001c: 3–4 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.25, 2001: 1)

In the Islamic Republic's assessment, extra-BTWC export controls had also undermined the treaty's universality. Given the problems related to the implementation of article X, the Iranian argument went, it was hard to convince outsiders that their accession to the BTWC would provide them with concrete benefits. The fact that there were non-states parties that continued to receive biological transfers from BTWC member states, Iranian officials added, further eroded the convention's appeal. Accordingly, in addition to asking the states parties to review their "national regulations governing international exchanges and transfers in order to ensure their consistency with the objectives of the Convention and specifically the provisions of Article X,"[94] the Islamic Republic's delegates called on the conference participants to draw a clear line between the member states and the non-states parties and to refrain from biological transfers to the latter. (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 3 and BWC/CONF. V/COW/WP.9, 2001: 2)

Conversely, the Iranians demanded, the states parties from the developed world should reward those of the developing world for their treaty membership and for their commitment to the provisions of the BTWC by promoting scientific and technological exchanges and fostering international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities. Moreover, Iranian delegates continued, advanced industrialized countries should facilitate free trade and the fullest possible exchange in biological agents as well as necessary technologies for peaceful purposes in order to enhance the economic and technological development of the states parties. The Iranians also emphasized that the states parties' right to participate in those exchanges should be explicitly ensured. Iran's calls were endorsed by other NAM states and they were concretized through examples of how advanced industrialized countries could respond to them. The concrete measures referred to by the Iranians and other NAM delegations ranged from information exchange and the creation of biological data bases and training programs to the

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[94] The citation is from a working paper jointly submitted by Iran, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Libya, and Pakistan at the Fifth Review Conference on 26 November 2001 (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.9, 2001: 2).

improvement of the states parties' capabilities in the surveillance, prevention, and treatment of diseases. (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.9, 2001: 1 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.12, 2001: 1–3)

At the Fifth Review Conference, the NAM delegations also raised the issue of the establishment of a BTWC Cooperation Committee that had already been hotly debated in the AHG. Pointing out that there was a need for an institutional mechanism within the treaty that would "consult on, monitor and review activities fostering international cooperation and assistance and the fullest possible exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information" for peaceful purposes, the Islamic Republic and other NAM countries spoke of a committee that would meet on a regular basis, once a year at minimum. At those meetings, the NAM countries added, the committee would devise recommendations to the states parties with respect to the promotion of biological transfers and exchanges between them. (BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.9, 2001: 1 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.31, 2001: 1)

As was the case during the AHG negotiations, the delegations of Iran, India, Indonesia, China, Cuba, Libya, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka were also jointly of the opinion that the BTWC needed a mechanism that would enable the states parties to settle their differences regarding biological transfers for peaceful purposes. If a state party was fully committed to its obligations under the BTWC but was still being denied a transfer by another state party, the NAM states opined, it ought to have the right to ask for redress through an institutionalized mechanism. Once again, however, the NAM delegations' calls for the establishment of such a mechanism as well as for the creation of a Cooperation Committee were rejected especially by the Western governments. (Soltanieh 2001c: 4; BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.25, 2001: 1 and Rissanen 2002)

4.2.4.3 The Fifth Review Conference of the BTWC: the resumed session of November 2002

As already noted above, the statement made by the United States in the final hours of the Fifth Review Conference calling for the termination of the AHG's mandate had resulted in the conference's decision to adjourn its proceedings and to reconvene in November 2002. Thus, for the first time in the BTWC review conferences' history, the states parties had not been able to agree on a final declaration. In this sense, then, the deliberations by Iran and other conference participants on the substantive treaty-related

issues had turned out to be meaningless. Indicating how close the delegations had come to an agreement on a final declaration, the chairman of the conference stated that 95% of the draft declaration's content had been agreed upon by the time the United States had delivered its fateful statement (Rissanen 2002).[95]

Paralyzed by their failure to bring the Fifth Review Conference to a successful conclusion, the states parties remained diplomatically passive during the months before the commencement of the review conference's resumed session in November 2002. As far as Iran was concerned, two main biological arms control topics were touched upon by the officials of the Islamic Republic during this period: the issue of BTWC non-compliance and the fate of the AHG. As for the first subject, Iran continued to criticize the United States for its diplomacy at the November–December 2001 session of the review conference. Still offended by the fact that the U.S. delegation had publicly named Iran as one of the countries in non-compliance with the BTWC[96] – as well as by the fact that the United States had requested the conference to call on Iran and the other countries it has listed as treaty violators to "terminate their offensive biological weapons programmes and to comply fully with their obligations" –, Iranian authorities continued to argue that it was in fact the Americans themselves who constantly undermined the cause of biological disarmament. The destructive U.S. diplomacy at the Fifth Review Conference, and prior to that, at the 24th session of the AHG, the Iranians maintained, were telling examples of the dangers posed by "U.S. unilateralism." The Islamic Republic let it be known that should the Americans continue to baselessly accuse Iran of biological weapons development, it would be prepared to knock down consensus at the Fifth Review Conference's resumed session.[97]

As far as the future of the AHG process was concerned, the Islamic Republic continued to underscore the group's importance and uniqueness. In February 2002, at the CD, Iran reiterated its position that the finalization of the BTWC protocol was the only effective way of strengthening the BTWC and of combatting the future challenges faced by the states parties in the area of biological disarmament. Strict adherence to the

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[95] An Iranian estimate speaks of 90% of the issues finalized (author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002).

[96] Note, for example, the following Iranian defence against the U.S. assertion from February 2002: " [...] we consider the development and the use of weapons of mass destruction inhuman, immoral, illegal and against our very basic principles. They have no place in our defence doctrine. We do not have, nor do we seek, any such weapons, and most certainly we do not accept or tolerate allegations by those who have clearly placed themselves and their protégé [Israel] outside the law" (CD/PV.900, 2002: 10).

[97] This paragraph draws upon Pearson (2002: 19); Rissanen (2002) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

1994 mandate of the AHG, Iranian officials argued, "would both ensure the total and effective ban of another category of weapons of mass destruction and leave no ground for baseless allegations of non-compliance which lack any verifiable justification." The Iranians also stressed that the AHG process could – and should – go ahead without the participation of the United States. (CD/PV.900, 2002: 11)

By the summer of 2002, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic had openly admitted that it was unrealistic to expect the AHG process to restart any time soon. They noted that the Americans had to reconsider their position on the AHG before any progress in the matter could be achieved, but did not believe that any changes in the U.S. stand would occur as long as the administration of president George W. Bush stayed in power. As the AHG process had been at least momentarily deserted, the Iranians were now ready to listen to diplomatic suggestions on how the states parties could strengthen the BTWC in the absence of the additional protocol. Yet, at the same time, as one Iranian official put it, the Islamic Republic focused on "keeping the AHG alive." Dismissing efforts that aimed to terminate the mandate of the AHG, Iranian representatives emphasized that the 1994 mandate remained intact and that there was no time limit to it. Also, they stressed that the collective inventory of experience and knowledge resulting from years of hard work in the AHG was too valuable to be abandoned for good. At some point, Iranian officials declared, the states parties would have to restart the AHG process and successfully finalize it.[98]

After the suspension of the Fifth Review Conference on 7 December 2001, the chairman of the conference had started consultation rounds with national delegations in order to try to bridge the differences between them on the conference's outcome before the start of the resumed session of November 2002. The basic conclusion emerging from those discussions had been that the resumed session should solely concentrate on the issue of the states parties' post-conference cooperation with regard to the BTWC.[99] As a result, on 6 November 2002, the chairman of the Fifth Review Conference introduced his proposal for the conference's final document which included details of a follow-up mechanism calling for a one-week annual meeting of the states parties each year until 2006, with each such gathering preceded by a two-week preparatory meeting

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[98] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

[99] As put by the chairman of the conference himself: "The question of follow-up is crucial, as without agreement on this it is likely that nothing will be done by States Parties collectively to strengthen or even maintain the Convention until at least the next Review Conference, due in 2006" (cited in Pearson 2002: 20).

of experts. According to the chairman's draft decision, each of the annual meetings would focus on a specific topic with the aim of implementing and strengthening the BTWC. (Pearson 2002: 21 and BWC/CONF.V/CRP.3, 2002: 1)

In 2003, the chairman's proposal put forth, the states parties would discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on national measures to implement the prohibitions of the BTWC and on national measures to ensure the security of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins. In 2004, they would deliberate on how to enhance international capabilities for responding to, investigating, and mitigating the effects of, biological weapons use or suspicious disease outbreaks, as well as on how to strengthen national and international efforts against infectious diseases. For 2005, the final year of the chairman's three-year scheme, the draft decision planned discussions on codes of conduct for scientists. Finally, the chairman's proposal stated that all the meetings by the states parties would reach their conclusions by consensus and that the Sixth Review Conference of 2006 would consider the work of the prior meetings and decide on further action. (BWC/CONF.V/CRP.3, 2002: 1)

Providing a background for his draft decision, the chairman of the Fifth Review Conference told the participants of the resumed session that the document before them was not a typical product of a BTWC review conference. It was not a draft final declaration on whose formulation previous review conferences had mainly focused. Instead, it only dealt with what was strictly necessary to get the states parties out of the diplomatic deadlock in which they had ended up in December 2001. The chairman also recognized that the content of his proposal would not satisfy all delegations. Nevertheless, he said, the five topics listed in the draft decision to guide the diplomatic follow-up constituted the only realistic basis for future multilateral work on the implementation and strengthening of the BTWC. (Pearson 2002: 21–22)

In the end, on 14 November 2002, the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference adopted the chairman's text by consensus. Even though the Iranians and other NAM delegations ultimately went along with the follow-up mechanism put forward by the chairman – or what became known in the BTWC circles as the "new process" or "new approach" –, they had reservations about it as well as about the state of biological disarmament in general.[100] In a joint statement, the NAM delegations

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[100] Immediately following the decision on the chairman's draft, Iran and other NAM countries stressed that their acceptance of the document had based on understanding that (a) "the ambiguities" in the chairman's text would be subsequently clarified, (b) the states parties were sovereign and could together and at any time decide on further BTWC-related diplomatic activities, (c) the 2006 BTWC review

expressed their displeasure with the "limited nature" of the final decision taken by the states parties. In their opinion, enhanced implementation of the BTWC was the maximum that could result from the follow-up process. Thus, the NAM delegations criticized, the outcome of the resumed session had turned out to be a far cry from the long-lived diplomatic goal of a legally binding BTWC protocol. In addition to expressing their "deep disappointment" at the fact that the states parties had not been able to strengthen the BTWC through the planned protocol – that the protocol had been "snatched away" from the states parties –, the NAM delegations regretted that the Fifth Review Conference had failed to succesfully conclude its work at its original session in 2001. (BWC/CONF.V/15, 2002: 1)

However, Iran and other NAM countries did not view the resumed session's outcome merely through dark lenses. In their joint statement, the NAM delegations asserted that they had succeeded in preventing any attempt to foreclose the option that the states parties would embark upon "more meaningful work" in the future. They also took the credit for "preserving multilateralism as the only vehicle for preventing the reprehensible use of disease as instruments of terror and war in a sustainable way." The NAM statement thus implied that the NAM delegations, including that of Iran, were satisfied with having achieved their main goal at the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference: to keep the spotlight on the AHG and to make sure that the post-conference diplomatic follow-up – and the expert meetings prior to the annual gatherings of the states parties, in particular – could not be interpreted as replacing the AHG process.[101]

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conference would decide on further action in the area of biological disarmament, and (d) the BTWC "forms a composite whole and that while it is possible to address related issues separately, it will be necessary for all of the inter-linked elements of the Convention – whether they relate to regulation, compliance or promotion – to be dealt with" (BWC/CONF.V/15, 2002: 2).

[101] This paragraph draws upon BWC/CONF.V/15 (2002: 1) and author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002.

5 ISLAMIC IRAN AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS DISARMAMENT[1]

5.1 From the Revolution to the Cease-Fire

5.1.1 The Islamic Republic and the Shah's nuclear legacy

5.1.1.1 The denouncement of the Shah's nuclear power program

One of Iranian arms control officials' first tasks after the 1979 revolution was to draw a distinction between the policies of the ousted Pahlavi regime and those of the newly founded Islamic Republic. As a result, hard criticism of the Shah regime's military ambitions formed an integral part of Islamic Iran's initial, evolving arms control argumentation. In the opinion of the representatives of the Islamic Republic, the Shah had militarized the Iranian society by wasting huge sums of money on the country's military and on weapons imports that were intended, first and foremost, for strengthening the Shah's and, by extension, great power imperialists' grip on the Iranian nation.[2]

In the light of the strong denouncement of the Pahlavi regime and its allegedly destructive arms policies, it is striking that the criticism directed at the Shah by the authorities of the Islamic Republic did not include references to the Iranian monarch's interest in acquiring a nuclear weapons capability for his country. In spite of the fact that many people inside and outside Iran had believed at the time of the Shah that the ambitious nuclear power program launched by the Iranian monarch in 1974 had at least partly been motivated by military considerations, the officials of the Islamic Republic did not draw a linkage between the Shah and nuclear weapons.[3]

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[1] A nuclear weapon consists of a nuclear explosive and a delivery system. It creates an explosion by releasing energy through nuclear fission or fission and fusion reactions. Fissile material is thus the essential component of a nuclear weapon. The term 'fissile material' refers mainly to the isotopes of uranium and plutonium that can be fissioned by thermal neutrons. Although uranium-235 and plutonium-239 are the fissile materials typically used in the production of nuclear armaments, there are other fissile materials potentially usable for weapons purposes. These include neptumium-237 – it is believed that one or more nuclear-weapon states may have tested a nuclear explosive using this material – and americium. A state needs some 8 kilograms of plutonium or 25 kilograms of highly enriched uranium (HEU) to produce its first nuclear explosive. Ballistic missiles and bomber aircraft are the most sophisticated means employed to carry nuclear explosives to their targets. (Tulliu and Schmalberger 2001: 114, 116; Walker and Berkhout 1999: 41, 45 and Albright and Barbour 1999: 85)

[2] See above the discussion in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

[3] According to Spector (1987: 46–50), the Shah had apparently had a clandestine nuclear weapons research program that had focused on uranium enrichment and plutonium separation technologies – that

That the representatives of the Islamic Republic did not allude to the Shah's nuclear weapons aspirations may have resulted from their ignorance of the details of the Shah's nuclear activities. However, a more plausible explanation could be that the decision-makers of the new Iranian regime ultimately refrained from publicly making the connection because they wanted to leave the nuclear weapons option open for themselves. In other words: why make noise about the military component of the Shah's nuclear program when it could be harnessed, if so desired, to serve the Islamic Republic? The explanation focusing on the military calculations of post-Pahlavi Iran's leaders is supported, among others, by the fact that soon after the revolution, some members of Iran's religious establishment openly expressed their interest in the development of nuclear weapons (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 217 and Spector 1987: 45, 56). Also, it is supported by the belief that, following the revolution, the Islamic Republic probably inherited most of the data and know-how generated by the rudimentary nuclear weapons research efforts launched by the Shah (Koch and Wolf 1997: 131).[4] But even though the representatives of the Islamic Republic seemed to intentionally sideline the military dimension of the Shah's nuclear ambitions and refrained from using the issue as further evidence of the purportedly dangerous nature of the ousted monarchical regime, they spared no criticism as far as the declared objectives of the Shah's nuclear power program themselves were concerned. On the contrary, the program was subjected to close scrutiny and its fundamentals were strongly challenged.

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is, on the development of a domestic capability for the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes – and on designing nuclear weapons themselves. During the final years of the Shah's rule, an active debate had taken place among observers on whether Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons capability and what the incentives and disincentives for such a course of action were (see Hessing-Cahn [1975]; Martin [1977]; Cottrell and Dougherty [1977] and Cottrell et al. [1980]). Of course, the representatives of the Shah's regime had repeatedly denied Iran's interest in nuclear weapons. For official statements to this effect, see NPT/CONF/SR.4 (1975) and NPT/CONF/C.1/SR.11 (1975) which underscored Iran's commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its interest in global and regional nuclear disarmament. The debate on the Shah's nuclear intentions has continued after the 1979 Iranian revolution. Although most observers seem to be convinced that the Shah was seeking a nuclear weapons capability, some have continued to dispute such a view. Akbar Etemad, the former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and a central player in the Shah's nuclear power program in the 1970s, for example, has claimed that "the Shah's nuclear ambition was only of a civilian nature with no military applications in mind." On the other hand, Ardishir Zahidi, the Shah's foreign minister between 1967–1971, has argued that the Shah had "aimed at creating what is known as a 'surge capacity,' that is to say to have the know-how, the infrastructure and the personnel needed to develop a nuclear military capacity within a short time without actually doing so." Asadullah Alam, the Shah's close confidant and his long-time Imperial Court minister, in turn, has written in his memoirs that the monarch had probably envisioned Iran having nuclear armaments. (Etemad 1987: 213; *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 June 2004 and Alam 1991: 453)

[4] The subject of Islamic Iran's nuclear weapons efforts will be discussed separately below in chapter 6.

The Shah had launched his nuclear program with the stated aim of providing Iran with a vast nuclear infrastructure that would be capable of accounting for much of the country's electricity needs and hence preserve oil, the vital Iranian source of foreign exchange, for export purposes. It was claimed at the time that, without a nuclear power program, Iran – whose industries and citizens were consuming more and more oil-generated electricity – could cease to be an oil exporter by the mid-1990s. The Shah's government had estimated, in 1974, that in order to sufficiently limit the domestic use of oil for power generation, Iran would need a nuclear infrastructure with an installed power capacity of 23,000 megawatts (MW). The Shah's original aim was that within a period of twenty years, his country would be able to cover some 40 percent of its total installed power capacity through nuclear reactors. Bearing the main responsibility for the realization of this objective, whose attainment was estimated to cost some $30 billion, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, which had been established by the Shah in 1974, had rapidly started to conduct negotiations with a host of supplier countries – mainly France, West Germany, and the United States – on contracts that would provide Iran with a network of 23 nuclear power plants as well as with the fuel needed for those reactors. Also, Iranian authorities had shown interest in acquiring facilities to enrich uranium, fabricate reactor fuel, and reprocess spent fuel, as well as launched a number of national research and development projects that sought to contribute to Iran's nuclear program and generally strengthen the country's scientific and technical capabilities.[5]

By 1978, however, the Shah's government had realized that the planned nuclear power capacity of 23,000 MW by the year 1994 could not be achieved and acknowledged that the goals set for the Iranian nuclear program had to be revised. There had been a number of reasons that had necessitated the program's review. Financially, Iranian authorities' original plans had become unrealistic due to the rapid decrease in

[5] For detailed presentations of the various aspects of the Shah's nuclear program and its implementation, see Etemad (1987: 205–209); Mossavar-Rahmani (1982: 201–207) and *Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* (2005: 9–11). In addition to the economic rationale behind the Shah's nuclear program, and the military motive that is believed to also have played a role in Iranian nuclear calculations, there were other considerations that had pushed the Shah's government to embark on the program. According to Mossavar-Rahmani, Iran's nuclear efforts had been partly driven by the pressure put on Iranian authorities by Western countries which had hoped that Iran would spend its petrodollars on industrial goods and services imported from them. Moreover, the prestige believed to be accruing to Iran from belonging to the group of nuclear nations had supposedly been another additional motivation for the program. Finally, the fact that the Shah administration's dealings with foreign nuclear suppliers had presumably included an element of corruption had provided Iranian officials with a further incentive to implement the program. (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 204)

world market oil prices in the second half of the 1970s. Also, the sharply risen reactor prices in the same time period had challenged Iran's ability to execute its nuclear program. On top of the financial factors, increasing political instability within Iran, combined with a number of practical problems related to the nuclear program's implementation – such as finding suitable locations for the power plants –, had seriously obstructed the Shah's nuclear efforts. (Etemad 1987: 205 and Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 201–202)

In the end, it was the post-Pahlavi leadership in Iran that turned out to have the final say on the future of the country's nuclear plans. And the decision made by the leaders of the Islamic Republic in the aftermath of the revolution was unambiguous: the nuclear program initiated by the Shah would be halted. Explaining their decision, the authorities of the Islamic Republic referred to a number of factors. First of all, by pointing to the program's massive costs, they questioned the nuclear effort's rationale altogether. As stressed by the president of the AEOI in September 1982, the Shah had embarked upon a major nuclear program "without any consideration for the living conditions and essential needs of the [Iranian] people" (GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 28).[6]

Secondly, the authorities of the Islamic Republic maintained that the Shah's program had based on untenable fundaments and that its execution had suffered from major deficiencies. Especially the fact that Iran's nuclear efforts had been highly dependent on foreign hardware, materials, and services caught the post-revolutionary leadership's attention. Highly sensitive about the issue of national sovereignty, the leaders of the Islamic Republic portrayed the Shah's nuclear plans as yet another indication of the dethroned monarch's readiness to hand over Iran to the control of foreign powers. A less ideological Iranian argument went that the high degree of dependence on outside suppliers had put the country's nuclear program at the mercy of decisions made in the supplier countries and thereby critically hampered the prospects for long-term national planning and actions in the nuclear field. (GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 26; GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 28 and Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 210–211)

In addition to pointing to the financial ramifications of nuclear power production in Iran as well as to the issue of nuclear dependence, the post-revolutionary Iranian critics

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[6] Also see Iran's September 1980 statement made at the International Atomic Energy Agency which noted that "the cost of generating electricity [by nuclear reactors] would have ended up being several times higher than the comparable cost in the supplier countries" (GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 27). By 1978, it had been estimated that the final bill for the Shah's nuclear program would total $80–120 billion (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 201).

of the Shah's nuclear program claimed that the monarchical regime had overlooked the important fact that Iran's incomplete electric-power grid was not capable of efficiently transmitting the electricity produced by the planned reactors. As regards the nuclear reactors themselves, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the Shah's regime had understated the risks pertaining to the selection of plant sites in a country which is prone to earthquakes. They also criticized the Shah's government for having paid too little attention to the issues of nuclear waste management and nuclear safety. Alluding to the March 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident in the United States, they noted that a developing country like Iran, lacking nuclear and technological know-how, would be particularly vulnerable to nuclear accidents and to the consequences of radioactive fall-out. (GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 26; GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 28 and Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 212)

The points raised by the officials of the Islamic Republic against the Shah's nuclear program closely followed the content of the criticism that had been directed at Iran's nuclear efforts already before the 1979 revolution by a small group of energy experts and economists working in the Iranian government and academia.[7] Following the revolution, thus, the authorities of the Islamic Republic were informed of the weaknesses of Iran's nuclear program and were able to quickly halt its implementation. The statement made by the head of the AEOI at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna in September 1980 expressed the conclusion drawn by the new power-holders in Tehran: "The [Shah's] nuclear power project had run counter to the very fabric and spirit of Iran's revolutionary ideals, and had therefore been cancelled" (GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 26).

The first steps to slow down the pace of Iran's nuclear program had already been taken before the 1979 revolution. As a result of the Shah government's internal review of its nuclear activities during the final months of its rule, Iran had suspended negotiations with West Germany on the purchase of four and with the United States on the purchase of six to eight nuclear reactors. By mid-1978, thus, the Iranian leadership had recognized that the four nuclear units under construction at the time – two of them were being built at a site near the city of Bushehr on the Persian Gulf and the remaining two were to be placed at Darkhuvin near the city of Ahwaz in southwestern Iran – occupied its attention to the extent that the acquisition of new reactors was, at least

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[7] See Mossavar-Rahmani (1982: 202, 208–217).

temporarily, out of question.[8] Added to the suspension of negotiations with the Germans and the Americans on the purchase of additional reactors, in January 1979, in the middle of major political turmoil inside Iran, the caretaker government of Shahpur Bakhtiar had announced the cancellation of Iran's order for the two Darkhuvin reactors for which preliminary site work had been underway for two years. (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 203, 206)

After the revolution, the new Iranian leadership continued from where the old regime had left off. In the course of 1979, the Islamic Republic called off the deal for the Bushehr reactors, and its eventual decision to halt the Shah's nuclear power program meant that all the country's nuclear fuel contracts with foreign suppliers were cancelled as well, including the agreement with Kraftwerk Union on the supply of fuel for the Bushehr reactors and the fuel supply contract with Framatome regarding the Darkhuvin units.[9] Furthermore, the Iranian revolution brought about the demise of the U.S.-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement, the final draft of which had been signed on 10 July 1978. Had the agreement been put into effect, it would have resulted in wide-ranging nuclear assistance from the United States to Iran.[10] (Etemad 1987: 205–206 and Spector 1987: 53, 170)

5.1.1.2 The start of the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities

It has been argued that, in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini declared his opposition to nuclear science (Rathmell 1995: 11). If this really was the case, it did not take a long time for the new Iranian leadership to circumvent Khomeini's initial position. After the Islamic Republic had stopped the Shah's nuclear program and taken the necessary steps to free Iran from its nuclear deals with foreign suppliers, it began to elaborate on its attitude towards nuclear science and technology.

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[8] The two 1,190 MW Bushehr plants had originally been ordered from Kraftwerk Union – a subsidiary of the German firm Siemens – in 1974, whereas the contract for the two 935 MW Darkhuvin units, signed the same year, had been made with the French company Framatome (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 206 and Hessing-Cahn 1975: 189).

[9] In 1974, as part of its nuclear program, the Shah's Iran had also acquired – through the provision of a loan of $1 billion to Eurodif, a French-led consortium – a 10 percent share in the Eurodif uranium enrichment plant based in Tricastin, France. In January 1980, however, the Islamic Republic made it known that it refused to buy 10 percent of the enriched uranium produced by the plant as called for by the Shah's contract with Eurodif. (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 206 and Albright and Hibbs 1992: 10)

[10] For the details of the nuclear agreement between the Shah's Iran and the United States and for an overview of the history of Iranian–U.S. nuclear relations, see Sahimi (2004) and *Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* (2005: 9–11).

On 24 September 1980, two days after the Iran–Iraq war had broken out, the representatives of the Islamic Republic stated at the IAEA that their government was fully committed to research and development in science and technology, and "within this context, was studying and pursuing the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology" (GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 26).

Preparing ground for the Islamic Republic's activities in the nuclear area, Iranian officials further noted that in the light of their country's intention to diversify its energy resources, it needed development programs for the utilization of nuclear energy. The authorities of the Islamic Republic thus seemed to accept the fundamental notion initially put forward by the Shah's government that Iran needed a nuclear power program to satisfy the needs of its economy. To distance themselves from the former regime, however, the representatives of the Islamic Republic emphasized that post-revolutionary Iran's programs for the utilization of nuclear energy would rely on "locally acquired or developed experience and would entail [...] the sharing of resources with other interested countries." (Ibid.)

Subsequently, on various occasions during the war years, the Islamic Republic made it known that despite the funding and personnel reductions introduced at the AEOI in the aftermath of the revolution, it would keep a civilian nuclear power program alive.[11] In September 1982, for example, the president of the AEOI said that now that the Iranian people had become masters of their own destiny, his organization was ready to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to contribute to the "harmonious development of the country as a whole." The stated Iranian aim was nuclear self-sufficiency. This objective was told by the Iranians to stem from two sets of considerations. First, it was one aspect of the Islamic Republic's general determination to be active in all fields of science and technology. Secondly, the Islamic Republic sought nuclear self-sufficiency because, inspired by Islamic ideology, it wanted to pass its know-how to the world's "oppressed nations" and to free them from the domination of the superpowers. The value of science, the Iranians emphasized, lay in its application, not in science itself. (GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 28–29; GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 17 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 2)

Officially, the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities during the war years focused on three main areas: natural uranium exploration, nuclear research, and the completion of

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[11] For the financial and personnel cuts that hit the AEOI after the revolution, see Moore (1994: 383).

the Bushehr reactors.[12] As for the uranium exploration program, it survived from the Shah period and gained momentum after the revolution. In 1984, Iranian authorities announced the discovery of some 5,000 metric tons of uranium in the Saghand region of the Yazd province. Three years later, in 1987, the Islamic Republic informed that it was planning to set up a plant in the Yazd province producing uranium oxide concentrate or so-called yellowcake. (Etemad 1987: 206, 215 and Cordesman 1993: 107)

Another area of nuclear activity that remained somewhat immune to Iran's revolutionary turmoil was nuclear research. Even though many scientists involved in the Shah's program had left Iran as a result of the revolution, a significant number of nuclear researchers had stayed in the country. The main reason for this had been the post-revolutionary leadership's view that national work on nuclear research should go on. After a period of ferment, during which the AEOI had tried to keep the research teams together and lure back many of those who had occupied key places in them, the Islamic Republic succeeded in maintaining and gradually expanding Iranian nuclear research efforts whose main declared aim was to study the applications of nuclear science in medicine, agriculture, and industry. (Etemad 1987: 208; Spector 1987: 54, 172 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 5)

The opening of Iran's second nuclear research center in Isfahan in 1984 – the nuclear research center of Tehran University, established by the Shah in 1959, remained the country's primary research facility – was one indication of the Islamic Republic's determination to support the research activities that had been launched during the Shah years. The Iranians tried to obtain a nuclear research reactor for the Isfahan center by approaching France and Pakistan, but after unsuccessful discussions, they had to settle for a reactor delivered by China in 1985. Two years later, the Chinese provided Iran with a small calutron for the purpose of uranium enrichment research. Also in 1987, the Islamic Republic signed a nuclear deal with Argentina in which the Argentinians agreed to convert the Iranian research reactor based at Tehran University from burning 93

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[12] In spite of these declared areas of emphasis, however, the AEOI set a wide-ranging agenda for the Islamic Republic's future nuclear efforts. The agenda was composed of five major objectives. First of all, the AEOI sought to gain access to nuclear science and technology. This effort involved the build-up of Iran's know-how in the design and construction of nuclear reactors, in nuclear fuel-cycle activities, as well as in other advanced nuclear technologies. Relatedly, the AEOI strove to train a new cadre of Iranian nuclear experts to advance the country's nuclear aspirations. Secondly, the AEOI aimed at offering nuclear services for industrial, agricultural, and medical purposes, and thirdly, at supplying the necessary raw materials for the country's nuclear fuel-cycle activities. Fourthly, the organization declared its intention to safeguard the natural environment and the Iranian people from radiation through radiological control and monitoring. Finally, the AEOI underscored the role of nuclear energy in fulfilling Iran's future electricity requirements. (Ibid.)

percent enriched uranium fuel to using 20 percent enriched uranium fuel. This agreement had been necessitated by the fact that the Americans – who had supplied the Tehran University's 5 MW research reactor in 1967 – had, as a result of the hostage crisis between the Islamic Republic and the United States, refused to continue fuel supplies for the Tehran reactor. The U.S. refusal was part of the American policy of strongly opposing all nuclear cooperation with Islamic Iran. (Cordesman 1993: 105–106; Koch and Wolf 1997: 130 and Einhorn and Samore 2002: 51–52)

As regards the future of the nuclear power plants whose construction had been abandoned shortly after the revolution, the post-revolutionary Iranian leadership eventually concluded that it wanted to see the two Bushehr reactors finished.[13] As a consequence, the debate in Iran about alternative uses for the nearly completed Bushehr facilities ended,[14] and the country's authorities began to contact foreign companies capable of completing the project. At this stage, the main focus was on the completion of the Bushehr-1 reactor. As stated by the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative in September 1984: "In view of all the technical, social, economic factors involved, the AEOI believed it essential to complete that power plant [Bushehr-1] and to put it into operation, in order to ensure Iran's self-sufficiency in that area and in other related industries" (GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 5).

Understandably, the West German Kraftwerk Union, Iran's original contracting party, was the Islamic Republic's first choice as a negotiation partner. Although experts from West Germany visited the Bushehr site in 1984 to assess the amount of work needed to complete the two reactors,[15] the Islamic Republic ultimately never succeeded in inducing the Germans to finish the job. In addition to the contractual conflict between the Iranians and the Germans over the Islamic Republic's initial cancellation of the 1974 Kraftwerk Union agreement, the dangers related to the on-going Iran–Iraq war contributed to West Germany's reluctance to get involved in the project. Still, the most important factor behind the German decision was the West German government's concern over the Islamic Republic's nuclear intentions. The fear of a nuclear weapon in

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[13] At the time of the revolution, the first unit of the Bushehr site – the so-called Bushehr-1 – was 90 percent complete, with 60 percent of the equipment installed, whereas the second unit, Bushehr-2, was 50 percent complete. The AEOI estimated at the time that the completion of the two Bushehr plants would cost the Islamic Republic some $7 billion. (Koch and Wolf 1997: 127 and Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 219)

[14] Soon after the revolution, some Iranians had suggested that the containment structures of the Bushehr facilities should be converted into storage silos for imported grain. Another suggestion – put forward, among others, by the newly appointed head of the AEOI – had been that the facilities would be used by two proposed fisheries and oceanographic institutes. (Mossavar-Rahmani 1982: 219)

the hands of a revolutionary regime that openly challenged regional and international status quo was not only a German worry but coloured the policies of other Western governments as well, especially those of the United States which actively sought to prevent West Germany and other countries from signing nuclear cooperation agreements with Iran. The diplomatic pressure applied by the Americans crucially contributed to the fact that the Islamic Republic was unable to find a nuclear partner to complete either one of the Bushehr reactors.[16] (Etemad 1987: 211, 215; Spector 1987: 53, 170 and Albright 1995)

After the revolution, then, the authorities of the Islamic Republic not only decided to resume work on the Bushehr site – which had formed the core of the Shah's nuclear program earlier so strongly criticized by the representatives of the new Iranian regime – but they simultaneously also inherited the burden of being suspected of nuclear weapons ambitions. The representatives of the Islamic Republic strongly rejected the accusations that Iran was interested in nuclear armaments[17] and emphasized that all nations had the right to plan, develop, and implement peaceful nuclear programs for the purpose of economic and social development. This point was made, among others, by the Islamic Republic's prime minister Mir-Husain Musavi who stated, in his message of September 1987 to the IAEA, that nobody had the right to interfere with national nuclear power programs, provided that such programs were guided by moral considerations and principles (GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 3).

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[15] According to subsequent German estimates, the Bushehr-1 plant could have been completed in about a three years' time (Koch and Wolf 1997: 127).

[16] The diplomatic pressure applied by the Americans with regard to the Bushehr reactors arose from the U.S. concern that the Bushehr project would increase Iran's general understanding of nuclear matters and thereby enable the Iranians, in the long run, to use such know-how in the production of a nuclear weapon. Also, the Americans feared that the Bushehr project could act as a cover for clandestine Iranian nuclear weapons activities. Furthermore, the United States had taken into account the possibility that the Iranians could, at some future point, manage to reprocess the nuclear fuel used in the Bushehr reactors and separate plutonium from the spent fuel. By doing so and then withdrawing from the NPT under the treaty's article X – which allows the states parties to pull back from the NPT if they decide that "extraordinary events," related to the treaty's subject matter, have jeopardized their supreme interests –, the U.S. argument went, the Islamic Republic would have free hands to use the plutonium for military purposes. Generally speaking, light-water nuclear reactors (LWR), such as the ones planned for the Bushehr site, pose a lesser nuclear-weapon proliferation risk than heavy-water nuclear reactors (HWR). This is because of the separation of plutonium from LWR fuel requires the shutting down of the reactor, an operation which can be easily noticed by other countries. Secondly, the plutonium separated from LWR fuel contains significant impurities, that is, low concentrations of plutonium-239 or so-called weapon-grade plutonium. HRW, on the other hand, are capable of producing high concentrations of plutonium-239. Moreover, they can burn natural uranium fuel, a fact which obviates the need for fuel enrichment facilities. (Koch and Wolf 1997: 128, 131; Gilinsky 2004: 28–30 and *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 5)

[17] The Islamic Republic's statement at the UN General Assembly in September 1983, for example, characterized such accusations as "insipid, taunting jokes" (A/38/PV.95, 1983: 1550).

Indeed, the words 'morality' and 'virtue' played a central part in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic defence against the allegations that its nuclear efforts were motivated by military considerations. As Muslims, the Iranians argued, they recognized the importance of science but also understood that scientific efforts had to be based on virtue and morality without which there would always be the risk of science being utilized for "anti-humanitarian" purposes. Given that the Islamic Republic was following the principles and doctrines of Islam, Iranian officials underscored, it categorically condemned "anti-humanitarian uses of nuclear technology." Iran's humane behaviour in the war against Iraq, the representatives of the Islamic Republic added, tellingly proved that their country was acting in accordance with the Islamic injunction that forbids the employment of science and technology to the detriment of the mankind. (GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 28; GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 3 and GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 13–14)

In the end, and despite official Iranian pronouncements to the contrary, the consequences of Iran's war against Iraq significantly obstructed the practical implementation of the Islamic Republic's nuclear plans.[18] Although it is difficult to say whether the Iran–Iraq conflict actually increased or decreased the status of the national nuclear program on Iranian decision-makers' war-time agenda, one thing remains clear: during the war years, the Islamic Republic made the fundamental decision to keep an Iranian nuclear program alive.

5.1.2 The formation of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations

5.1.2.1 Iran's opposition to nuclear weapons

While it took some time for Iran's post-revolutionary leadership to formulate the new regime's approach to nuclear science and technology, the Islamic Republic's official position on nuclear weapons was clear right from the start. In the Iranian opinion, no country in the world was entitled to be in possession of such armaments. Alluding to the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons, the representatives of the Islamic Republic repeatedly pointed out that a nuclear war could mean the end of the human

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[18] For the Iranian claim that the Iran–Iraq war did not hamper the Islamic Republic's nuclear efforts, see the statements made by Iran at the IAEA in October 1983 and September 1984 in which it talked about "remarkable improvements" and "rapid progress" made in the nuclear field (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 19 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 5).

species. They argued that the survival of humanity could be jeopardized not only by statesmen's conscious decisions to launch nuclear strikes, but also by their miscalculations and mistakes that could bring about an accidental nuclear war. And the longer the nuclear arms race especially between the superpowers continued, the Iranians added, the more likely it was that a nuclear catastrophe would ultimately actualize. (CD/PV.286, 1984: 25; A/38/PV.13, 1983: 191 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 6)

In the face of the devastating magnitude of destruction potentially caused by nuclear armaments, the Islamic Republic maintained, the world had to get rid of those weapons as soon as possible.[19] The call for universal and total nuclear disarmament thus played a key role in the Islamic Republic's evolving arms control argumentation. According to Iranian authorities, no individual or country could feel safe until nuclear weapons were eliminated from the face of the earth. Iran's stated concern over nuclear warfare mainly stemmed from the Cold War confrontation between the nuclear-armed blocs of the East and the West, but it also had historical roots, for the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, Iranian officials argued, had demonstrated that nuclear weapons could potentially be used in any conflict situation involving a nuclear power. (GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 16; A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45 and GC/XXXI/OR.301, 1987: 8)

Furthermore, the representatives of the Islamic Republic were of the opinion that even though all nations shared the obligation to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament, it was the five nuclear-weapon states (NWS) that had the main responsibility for the elimination of nuclear armaments.[20] Since nuclear weapons posed a threat to the whole mankind, the Iranians said, all efforts towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world should be detached from political calculations and exigencies. In practice, of course, nuclear arms control efforts between the Cold War adversaries were heavily coloured by power politics, a fact the Iranians did not miss. Quite the opposite, they strongly criticized the nuclear powers for disregarding their obligation, under article VI of the NPT, to take measures to halt the nuclear arms race

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[19] For Iranian calls for speedy and comprehensive nuclear disarmament, see NPT/CONF.II/C.1/2 (1980: 2) and CD/PV.404 (1987: 4). Against the backdrop of the Islamic Republic's war-time worries, of which Iraq's use of chemical weapons was a central one, it is interesting to note that whereas before the Iran–Iraq war the authorities of the Islamic Republic had said that nuclear disarmament took absolute priority over other areas of disarmament (CD/PV.45, 1979: 7, 9), in the course of the war nuclear disarmament was characterized more modestly as a vital issue requiring immediate action (CD/PV.203, 1983: 25, 28).

[20] The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons defined, in its article IX, a NWS as a state that had manufactured and detonated a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive devices prior to 1 January 1967. Hence, the five NWS meant by the NPT were, and still are, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China.

and to commit themselves to nuclear disarmament.[21] According to Iranian authorities, nuclear powers' weapons arsenals continued to expand both in qualitative and quantitative terms, in addition to which nuclear weapons were increasingly being deployed on the soil of non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS).[22] (A/C.1/39/PV.36, 1984: 62–65; A/36/PV.26, 1981: 122 and GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 4)

As if this did not suffice, Iranian officials continued, the superpowers were even planning to militarize the outer space. Referring specifically to the U.S. defence research and development plan known as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or the "Star Wars," which sought to create space-based systems to protect the United States from Soviet nuclear missile strikes,[23] the officials of the Islamic Republic feared that the SDI would only speed up nuclear arms racing and thereby seriously undermine international disarmament efforts. They expressed their government's opposition to the SDI and made repeated calls for the preparation of a comprehensive international convention banning the use of outer space for all kinds of military purposes.[24] (CD/PV.379, 1986: 6; CD/PV.425, 1987: 7 and CD/PV.286, 1984: 26)

From the Iranian standpoint, the SDI symbolized the superpowers' endless effort to gain military advantages over their opponents. This objective, Iranian officials argued, also characterized the superpowers' behaviour in their bilateral nuclear arms control talks. Even though welcoming the progress that was made in those negotiations,[25] the Islamic Republic ultimately regarded the bilateral deliberations as a diplomatic manifestation of the strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet

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[21] Article VI of the NPT states that "each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

[22] Under international law, the term 'non-nuclear-weapons states' refers to countries that have renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons under article II of the NPT.

[23] For the details of the SDI, launched by the U.S. administration of president Reagan in March 1983 at a time of major diplomatic tension between the two superpowers, see Waller (1993).

[24] The Iranians thus wanted to go beyond the stipulations of the so-called Outer Space Treaty of 1967 (Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies) which prohibits the deployment of objects carrying nuclear or any other kind of WMD in the earth's orbit, on celestial bodies, or in the outer space. The treaty does not deal with the deployment in outer space of weapons other than WMD and neither does it prohibit the launching of ballistic missiles with WMD – including nuclear warheads – through space. Iran signed the Outer Space Treaty in 1967 but has not ratified it. For a detailed discussion of the Outer Space Treaty, see Garthoff (1993).

[25] In 1979, for example, the Islamic Republic expressed its satisfaction over the signing of the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) which took place in June that year (CD/PV.45, 1979: 7–8 and A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 56). The treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union set limits on the parties' strategic nuclear delivery systems – that is, inter-continental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, air-to-surface ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers.

Union.[26] Beside using their arms control negotiations as an extension of their mutual rivalry, the Iranians claimed, American and Soviet authorities saw the bilateral arms control talks as a convenient channel to score propaganda points in international and domestic politics.[27]

In addition to criticizing the superpowers' record in nuclear arms control, the Islamic Republic strongly condemned the view that nuclear deterrence – the threat of the use of nuclear weapons by one country against a nuclear attack by another – guaranteed international peace and stability. In the Iranian view, the principle of nuclear deterrence and, by extension, the military doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD) – which provides a massive nuclear retaliation in response to a nuclear attack, thus resulting in the certain destruction of both the attacker and the defender – were totally unacceptable because they were simply not able to ensure international peace and security. According to the Islamic Republic, the dangers and uncertainties pertaining to the nuclear arms race made the deterrence constellation between the superpowers extremely unstable and put world security into serious jeopardy. Moreover, the Iranians found it morally appalling that armaments capable of destroying humanity played such an important role in the major powers' security calculations. (CD/PV.108, 1981: 13; A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45 and CD/PV.425, 1987: 6)

In the Iranian analysis, the superpowers' emphasis on nuclear weapons could not be explained merely by the Cold War. The Islamic Republic claimed that the United States and the Soviet Union viewed nuclear weapons also as a tool to pressure and blackmail Third World countries, the "oppressed," politically. Striving for the supremacy of the world, Iranian authorities argued, the superpowers took advantage of developing countries' fear of nuclear weapons and sought to expand their spheres of domination. Should developing countries try to resist those efforts, the Iranian argument went, the superpowers would not rule out the use of nuclear arms to silence their adversaries.[28] (A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 32; CD/PV.379, 1986: 5 and A/C.1/41/PV.24, 1986: 19–20)

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[26] As one representative of the Islamic Republic put it in 1980: "Reviewing the lost opportunities of the last decade on the basis of the behaviour of the superpowers, one suspects that none of them was really interested in reducing the arms race, but rather that each of them was seeking only to disarm the other, while assuring the maintenance of its own weaponry" (CD/PV.61, 1980).

[27] The following Iranian statement from 1983 is indicative of the Islamic Republic's argument: "The actions of the superpowers show that their claims on [...] the reduction and control of arms expenditure or the limitation of the number of submarine-launched ballistic missiles were nothing but an empty political gesture designed for their own publicity purposes" (A/38/PV.13, 1983: 191).

[28] Furthermore, the Iranians argued that the superpowers regarded nuclear weapons as a symbol of prestige. Rejecting such a view, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted that most countries of the

As evidence of the superpowers' readiness to use nuclear weapons against developing countries, the Iranians raised two points. On the one hand, they alluded to the U.S. employment of atomic bombs to obliterate Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II and asked what assurances there were that "one day the United States would not resort to nuclear force in order to crush the oppressed people of the world."[29] On the other hand, the Iranians argued that the discussion among nuclear powers about limited nuclear war, the idea that nuclear weapons could be used in small numbers for battlefield purposes, indicated that the use of nuclear weapons was viewed as a serious war-fighting option. The Islamic Republic strongly condemned the concept of limited nuclear war and declared it as highly dangerous because it made nuclear war thinkable and thereby increased the possibility of an all-out nuclear war.[30] (GC/SPL.1/OR.4, 1986: 21; NPT/CONF.II/C.1/2, 1980: 2 and CD/PV.286, 1984: 25)

From the Iranian viewpoint, then, the way in which the major powers viewed nuclear weapons was highly alarming. Great power nuclear arsenals not only increased international tension and served the cause of "tyranny and imperialism," Iranian officials argued, but they also drove NNWS to seek a nuclear-weapon capability of their own for the protection of their security and sovereignty. Yet, at the same time, the Iranians noted that it was all nations' moral duty to refrain from the possession of nuclear arms and, instead, to concentrate on the promotion of nuclear disarmament as a means to alleviate their security concerns. (NPT/CONF.III/SR.13/Add.1, 1985: 181 and CD/PV.203, 1983: 25)

Believing that nuclear powers were not likely to change their military thinking and behaviour in the foreseeable future, the Iranians called on Third World states to take the lead in multilateral nuclear disarmament diplomacy.[31] Alluding to the calls made by Ayatollah Khomeini, the officials of the Islamic Republic also asked intellectuals all

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world did not possess nuclear arms but the lack of such weapons had not undermined their prestige (NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 120).

[29] It should be emphasized in this connection that when the Islamic Republic spoke of the superpowers and their nuclear arms policies, it was the United States that bore the brunt of the Iranians' critical remarks. For Iranian verbal attacks against the United States, see A/36/PV.26 (1981: 123) and GC/XXVII/OR.253 (1983: 19).

[30] As put by one Iranian official who feared that a limited nuclear war could get out of the belligerents' hands and escalate into a full-blown nuclear confrontation: "It is naive to think that a nuclear war is like a boxing match – when it is going to get out of control it can be stopped merely by ringing the bell" (CD/PV.242, 1984: 7). The Iranian objection to the idea of limited nuclear war meant that the Islamic Republic joined the group of countries that called on NWS to adopt the principle of no-first-use of nuclear weapons in their military strategies and to lessen their reliance on nuclear arms (CD/PV.308, 1985: 12 and A/C.1/41/PV.24, 1986: 22).

over the world to educate the "masses" on the dangers of nuclear armaments so that they would rise against them and their possessors. As a concrete example of how developing countries and other opponents of nuclear weapons could contribute to nuclear disarmament, Iranian officials put forth the idea of an "international police force" composed of Third World countries that would "control the atomic arsenals of the East and West" under the supervision of the IAEA. More generally, the Islamic Republic called on the opponents of nuclear weapons worldwide to strive for a moral transformation in international relations, for such a transformation, the Iranians maintained, was a precondition for changes in the military mind-sets that embraced nuclear armaments. (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 18 and A/34/PV.21, 1979: 447).[32]

5.1.2.2 The Islamic Republic and the nuclear non-proliferation regime

In spite of Iran's 1983 proposal for the establishment of an international nuclear police force, an idea that was more of a diplomatic play on words than a serious arms control initiative, the post-revolutionary Iranian regime's first decade in power did not bring about major innovations in the country's nuclear arms control operations. On the contrary, there was a considerable continuity between the diplomacy of the ousted Pahlavi government and that of the Islamic Republic. The fact that the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime had for years spoken against nuclear weapons allowed the authorities of the Islamic Republic to lean on the diplomatic foundation that had been laid during the Shah era and to encrust it with their Islamic ideology.[33]

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[31] In this context, the Iranians drew a parallel between the nuclear arms race and colonization, on the one hand, and nuclear disarmament and decolonization, on the other (A/C.1/41/PV.24, 1986: 19–20).

[32] Following the moral course of action they were advocating, Iranian authorities opposed, among others, NATO's deployment, from 1983 onwards, of Pershing-II intermediate-range nuclear missiles in West Germany. In the Iranian view, the deployment of the Pershings – whose purpose was to counter the Soviet deployment of its SS-20 missiles – increased international tension as well as the danger of nuclear war. Iranian officials went as far as claiming that the deployment of the Pershings, which had a range of 650-1,800 kilometers, was "directly and seriously endangering the very existence of Iran and many other countries in North Africa and West Asia." As a consequence, the Iranian government lent its support to European peace movements which objected to NATO's missile deployment and stated that it was Iran's "Islamic and humanitarian duty" to speak against the Pershings. Subsequently, the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union provided for the removal of this class of weaponry on both sides. The Islamic Republic welcomed the INF treaty by describing it as a "small but nevertheless a positive step on the path of nuclear disarmament." (A/38/PV.13, 1983: 191; CD/PV.242, 1984: 12 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 45)

[33] For the continuity in Iran's nuclear arms control operations, see the following statements made by the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime on different nuclear arms control topics: A/S-10/PV.18 (1978: 338) (*opposition to nuclear weapons*); A/C.1/33/PV.14 (1978: 67–70) (*bilateral nuclear arms control between the United States and the Soviet Union*); NPT/CONF/SR.4 (1975: 14) (*article IV of the NPT*); CD/PV.6 (1979: 28) (*comprehensive nuclear test ban*); and A/C.1/33/PV.28 (1978: 37–41) (*security assurances*).

In addition to absorbing the core of the Shah regime's diplomatic legacy in the area of nuclear arms control, the Islamic Republic quickly declared its commitment to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime – that is, to the rules, norms, arrangements, organizations, and treaties established to prevent or retard the spread of nuclear arms (Redick 1993: 1079). Soon after the revolution, for example, Iranian authorities expressed their government's "great interest" in the NPT, the centerpiece of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and affirmed the Islamic Republic's attachment to the treaty (CD/PV.45, 1979: 9, 11).[34] But although the Iranians agreed to work within existing international nuclear arms control mechanisms and did not question the legitimacy of the basic elements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, they remained highly critical of the regime's efficacy and did not hesitate to put forth their views about the changes they believed the regime urgently needed.

The NPT itself, the representatives of the Islamic Republic constantly claimed, had not fulfilled its promises.[35] In the Iranian view, the NPT was inherently "discriminatory" and "humiliating" because it had obliged NNWS to give up important elements of their sovereignty – that is, to forswear the nuclear weapons option and to accept IAEA safeguards on all their peaceful nuclear activities and facilities – while, at the same time, it had not been able to ensure that NWS live up to their treaty commitments. The continuation of the nuclear arms race, the Iranians asserted, was a prime example of the fact that the NPT was not being implemented in a proper and balanced manner. In the Iranian analysis, the NPT was worthless unless it managed to prevent not only the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons but also the vertical proliferation of those armaments.[36] Even though the authorities of the Islamic Republic

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[34] In essence, the NPT obligates nuclear-weapon states not to transfer or assist others in acquiring nuclear armaments (article I), whereas the non-nuclear states parties are prohibited by the NPT from developing or receiving nuclear weapons (article II). The treaty also establishes nuclear safeguards in order to guarantee that fissionable material produced or used in non-nuclear-weapon states is employed only for peaceful purposes (article III). Moreover, the NPT recognizes the right of the states parties to research, produce, and use nuclear energy for non-military purposes (article IV), in addition to which it calls on all the states parties to negotiate in good faith measures related to nuclear disarmament as well as to work towards a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control (article VI). Iran signed the NPT in July 1968 and deposited its instruments of ratification in February–March 1970. As far as the agreement between Iran and the IAEA for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT was concerned, it entered into force in May 1974. For the details of the safeguards agreement between Iran and the IAEA, see INFCIRC/214 (1974).

[35] As one official of the Islamic Republic characterized in October 1979: "The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, almost 10 years after its entry into force, remains a lopsided and unfullfilled instrument" (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 53–55).

[36] The term 'horizontal nuclear proliferation' refers to the acquisition of nuclear weapons by other countries than those classified as NWS in the NPT. 'Vertical nuclear proliferation,' in turn, points to the efforts by NWS to increase the quantity and quality of their nuclear armaments. (Epstein 1993: 857)

recognized that the NPT had helped to block horizontal nuclear proliferation, they were highly disappointed at the treaty's contribution to the control of vertical nuclear proliferation. (NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 119–120; NPT/CONF.III/SR.13/Add. 1, 1985: 181 and A/S-12/PV.3, 1982: 35)

Iran's view on the implementation of article IV of the NPT

Another major NPT-related subject causing dissatisfaction among Iranian authorities was the implementation of the treaty's article IV which obliges NWS to facilitate and promote the efforts by NNWS to apply nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. According to the Islamic Republic, NWS had neglected their responsibilities under article IV, in addition to which Iranian officials strongly condemned the export control measures taken by nuclear supplier countries outside the NPT to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.[37] Pointing out that extra-NPT export controls fought against the independence and sovereignty of NNWS by preventing them from improving their scientific and industrial capabilities and by severely slowing down the execution of national nuclear programs for peaceful purposes, the representatives of the Islamic Republic declared all export control measures not sanctioned by the NPT – whether applied by one supplier or a group of supplier countries – as illegal and unacceptable. The IAEA's safeguards system introduced in the NPT, the Islamic Republic emphasized, constituted a sufficient and the only legitimate basis for ensuring that NNWS respect their legal obligation not to acquire nuclear armaments. Iranian officials noted that their government was ready to discuss the issue of additional nuclear verification measures if other NPT parties so wanted, but only on the condition that the potential new measures would be formalized within the IAEA framework and that they would be based on a consensus decision among NPT states parties. (NPT/CONF.II/C.II/34, 1980: 1–5; GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 3–4 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 35)

The Islamic Republic's portrayal of the reasons for the nuclear suppliers' reluctance to cooperate with NNWS and especially with developing countries in the nuclear field emanated from the Iranian leadership's ideological premises. In essence, the officials of

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[37] The Nuclear Suppliers Group, also known as the London Club, is one example of the extra-NPT export control arrangements the Iranians were alluding to. The NSG, created in 1975 in the aftermath of India's so-called peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974, is a group of nuclear supplier countries that oversees a set of guidelines aimed at ensuring that nuclear technology transfers are not diverted to nuclear explosive activities. For the NSG, see the group's own website at <www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org>.

the Islamic Republic claimed, the major powers used the transfers of nuclear materials, equipment, technology, and know-how as a tool to promote their evil foreign policy objectives. By preventing Third World countries, under the pretext of security concerns, from having access to peaceful applications of nuclear energy, the Iranian argument went, the major powers and the superpowers, in particular, wanted to keep the "oppressed" of the world in a backward state and under their domination. On the one hand, Iranian authorities lamented, the nuclear suppliers shamelessly exploited developing countries' natural resources, including their natural uranium reserves, but on the other hand, they hampered those same states' economic and technological development. At best, Iranian officials asserted, Third World countries were only allowed to conduct basic, mostly outdated, nuclear research activities. (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 17–18; GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 35 and GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 13–14)

Highly frustrated at the state of international implementation of article IV of the NPT, the Islamic Republic adopted the role of a staunch advocate of free international nuclear trade. In principle, the Iranians were of the opinion that all states had an "absolute and unlimited right of access" to nuclear materials, science, and technology.[38] In practice, however, the Islamic Republic drew a distinction between countries that had joined the NPT and concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA and states that had not done so and demanded a preferential treatment for the former. Iranian officials called on nuclear suppliers to provide NNWS with guaranteed assurances of nuclear transfers and underscored the need for "non-discriminatory, predictable and stable" international nuclear trade.[39] (NPT/CONF.II/C.II/34, 1980: 5; GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 3–4 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 38–39)

As far as concrete forms of nuclear assistance were concerned, the officials of the Islamic Republic asked nuclear suppliers and the IAEA to help Third World countries to

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[38] As emphasized by the Iranian representative addressing the IAEA's general conference in October 1983: "Science and technology belongs to all the nations of the world and should not be monopolized by a few countries" (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 17). Also see the Islamic Republic's IAEA statement from September 1982 which stressed that "while every country has its own culture, the transfer of science, technology and civilization should not be restricted by nationalistic principles but, rather, should be governed by a spirit of internationalism" (GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 29).

[39] Iranian officials' efforts to speak against horizontal nuclear proliferation and to simultaneously defend Third World countries' peaceful nuclear activities occasionally resulted in contradictory statements. Note, for example, the inconsistency between the Iranian conclusion that the spread of nuclear technology increased the risk of military uses of nuclear energy (CD/PV.242, 1984: 13) and the Iranian claim that the transfer of nuclear technology did not differ from the transfer of any other type of technology (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 18).

build up their nuclear infrastructures, among others, by supporting and promoting developing countries' educational efforts and by sharing relevant scientific and technological information with them. Furthermore, Iranian officials called for the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank that would ensure that developing countries have a secure long-term access to nuclear fuel supplies. The Islamic Republic also asked developed countries to help the developing ones to finance nuclear energy projects as well as called on them to establish a special fund within the IAEA to assist Third World countries in the development of peaceful nuclear activities. Seeking to put diplomatic pressure on nuclear suppliers in the issue of nuclear transfers, Iran allied itself with those developing countries that requested the IAEA's director-general to annually report to the agency's general conference on the member states' nuclear transfers and on the measures they had taken to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy and international nuclear cooperation. More significantly, still, the Islamic Republic implied that if the implementation of article IV of the NPT continued to remain unsatisfactory, Iran might not support the treaty's planned extension in 1995.[40] (NPT/CONF.II/C.II/34, 1980: 6; GC/XXIV/OR.223, 1980: 26–27 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 39)

Iran's argumentation on article IV was highly influenced by the Islamic Republic's experiences with its own nuclear efforts. The difficulties faced by the Iranians in the execution of their nuclear program generated critical comments on the NPT, on international nuclear non-proliferation efforts in general, and naturally on issues that specifically involved Iran's own nuclear activities. There were three principal subjects related to Iran's nuclear program that were brought up by the authorities of the Islamic Republic. First of all, the Iranians criticized the U.S. government's decision – taken in the wake of the November 1979–January 1981 hostage crisis between Iran and the United States – to discontinue its nuclear fuel supplies to the Tehran University's 5 MW research reactor. Iranian representatives strongly condemned the U.S. government's cut-

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[40] Article X of the NPT stipulates that 25 years after the convention's entry into force, "a conference shall be convened to decide whether the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods." The conference to review and extend the NPT took place in April–May 1995. At the conference, the states parties decided that the treaty shall continue in force indefinitely. Until the final stages of the 1995 conference, Iran held to the diplomatic position that the NPT should be extended only for limited periods of time. More accurately, Iran proposed an extension of 'rolling fixed periods of 25 years,' with a review and extension conference at the end of each fixed period. As the discussion below will demonstrate, the Islamic Republic's position on the issue of treaty extension stemmed from its effort to use the matter as a bargaining chip to promote its diplomatic objectives. For a detailed discussion of the multilateral deliberations at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, see Johnson (1995a).

off decision and maintained that it had cost their country dearly in terms of both time and money.[41] In the Iranian opinion, the cancellation of U.S. fuel supplies to the Islamic Republic constituted a clear violation of article IV of the NPT and testified to the discrimination continuously practiced by NWS against NNWS. While threatening to take the matter to a civil court, Iranian authorities asked the IAEA to help them to find an alternate fuel source for the Tehran reactor.[42] (GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 14–15 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 38–39)

The theme of discrimination also coloured Iran's comments on the problems it faced in the construction of the Bushehr-1 reactor. West Germany, whose authorities had prohibited German companies to take part in the Bushehr project, was harshly criticized by the Islamic Republic for following the superpower policy of obstructing developing countries' peaceful nuclear efforts. West Germany's course of action, Iranian officials noted, seriously undermined that country's credibility as a nuclear supplier and severely compromised Iran's right to pursue peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Iranian representatives directed similar kind of criticism at the French government which had refused to transfer enriched uranium to the Islamic Republic. Although it was the Iranians themselves who had initially refused to buy their country's 10-percent share of the enriched uranium produced by the Eurodif plant in Tricastin, the authorities of the Islamic Republic now complained that their country had never received fuel supplies from France and that the French government was not willing to pay either principal or interest for the money the Shah's government had lent to Eurodif. The behaviour of the French government, the officials of the Islamic Republic concluded, was yet another indication of the arbitrary treatment Iran and other developing countries were subjected to by NWS. (GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 15 and GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 18)

As far as the IAEA was concerned, the post-revolutionary Iranian regime declared its full support for the agency's activities, even if Iranian authorities did little to hide their view that the IAEA had not much to offer to countries, such as their own, that had been wrongfully branded as potential nuclear proliferators. The Islamic Republic's unease with the agency became evident in numerous statements in which Iran criticized the

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[41] According to the Islamic Republic, the "illogical sanction imposed by the United States" had seriously hampered Iranian nuclear scientists' work (GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984:4). In September 1985, Iranian officials claimed that the indirect and direct financial costs to their country resulting from the U.S. decision had totalled "well over $10 million" (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 38).

[42] As already discussed above, the nuclear fuel problem regarding the Tehran University's research reactor was ultimately solved after Argentina had agreed to convert the reactor from burning 93 percent enriched uranium fuel to using 20 percent enriched uranium fuel.

IAEA for having placed too little emphasis on the promotional aspect of its mandate.[43] According to the Islamic Republic, the activities of the IAEA left the impression that the agency was more interested in regulating devoloping countries' nuclear efforts than actually facilitating and promoting them. The lack of funds to finance assistance programs in the Third World, the Iranians argued, was a salient indication of the prevailing mentality within the IAEA. Iran called on developed countries to provide more funding to the agency and to ensure the constant flow of sufficient resources to the IAEA's assistance and cooperation programs with developing countries. (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 40; GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 13–14 and GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 3, 7)

While stressing that the IAEA's safeguards system was the only acceptable arrangement to verify non-nuclear-weapon states' commitment to the NPT, the Islamic Republic found faults also in the way the IAEA was carrying out its regulatory tasks. For one thing, Iranian officials maintained that countries which had a modest nuclear program and a limited capacity to pay for the agency's verification activities, such as their own, were being excessively burdened with safeguards costs. For another, the representatives of the Islamic Republic expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the IAEA's full-scope safeguards did not concern NWS. Arguing that the agency's safeguards system should function as a means to shed light on the nuclear weapons activities of NWS, the Iranians called for the extension of the IAEA safeguards' scope. Iranian officials argued that the so-called voluntary offer agreements that the IAEA had signed with the five NWS, and which mandated the agency to apply safeguards to some or all civilian – but not to military – nuclear materials and facilities of NWS, were totally inadequate because they did not contribute to the prevention of vertical nuclear proliferation.[44] The Islamic Republic declared voluntary offer agreements as useless and asked the agency not to channel its scarce resources to their implementation. Instead, Iranian officials demanded, the IAEA should create "true safeguards" that would cover

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[43] The functions of the IAEA, established in 1957, center around three areas of activity: (a) nuclear safety and security; (b) nuclear safeguards and verification (which comprise the so-called regulatory dimension of the agency's mandate), in addition to which the IAEA has the responsibility to (c) assist states with their nuclear research and development efforts as well as to contribute to practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world (the IAEA's so-called promotional task).

[44] The full-scope safeguards and the voluntary offer agreements of the IAEA aside, there exists a third class of IAEA safeguards. In the case of India, Pakistan, and Israel – three countries that are known to possess nuclear weapons –, the agency applies safeguards that are based on so-called item-specific agreements. These agreements specify the nuclear material, non-nuclear material, facilities, and equipment to be safeguarded by the IAEA. For details of the various types of IAEA safeguards, see *The Safeguards System of the International Atomic Energy Agency* (2003).

nuclear-weapon states' civilian and military facilities.[45] (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 39–40; GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 14, 16–17 and GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 4)

In essence, the Islamic Republic's argumentation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy testified to a diplomatic effort to balance between two contradictory factors: the Islamic Republic's ideological considerations – which underscored the importance of scientific and technological independence – and the hard reality, Iran's unavoidable dependence on foreign nuclear suppliers which eroded the credibility of Iran's ideological goal setting. While surely being aware of the difficulty of balancing between ideological and practical demands, the representatives of the Islamic Republic did not touch upon the question of how their country would manage to cling to its ideological principles while simultaneously trying to advance its nuclear program. Instead, they pointed to the injustice and discrimination their nuclear activities had constantly encountered and stressed that Iran's setbacks in the nuclear realm had made the attainment of the national objective of nuclear independence and self-sufficiency all the more important.[46]

Iran and other elements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime

During the period between the 1979 Iranian revolution and the 1988 cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic's deliberations on the nuclear non-proliferation regime mainly centered around the NPT and especially around its clauses on nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, Iran's general opposition to nuclear arms easily translated into diplomatic positions on other aspects of the non-proliferation regime as well. Thus, for example, the officials of the post-Pahlavi Iranian regime quickly adopted a strong stance against nuclear weapons testing. Following the diplomatic footsteps of the Shah's regime, the Islamic Republic supported the international efforts that had started in the 1950s and aimed at the conclusion of a

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[45] One element of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation on nuclear safeguards was the demand that Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African countries should be given a stronger representation in the organs of the IAEA, and particularly in the agency's board of governors (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 19; GC/XXX/OR.284, 1986: 17 and GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 4–6). The 35-member board of governors is responsible for approving the IAEA's safeguards procedures and agreements as well as for the general supervision of the agency's verification activities. Iran's dissatisfaction with what it referred to as "unbalanced representation" in the board of governors largely stemmed from the fact that the Islamic Republic itself had no seat in the board at the time. Iran had served in the board of governors in 1962–1964, 1968–1970, and 1974–1976, and subsequently sat on the board again in 1990–1992 and in 2001–2003.

[46] As stated by the president of the AEOI in September 1984, Iran's difficulties had strengthened Iranians' conviction that the only way forward was to "avoid all dependence on either the East or the West" (GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 5).

comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. In the opinion of Islamic Iran, a comprehensive test ban (CTB) had to be achieved as soon as possible, for it would add a crucial element to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and mark a significant step towards complete nuclear disarmament. (CD/PV.45, 1979: 11; CD/PV.61, 1980: 10 and A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 12)

The Iranians based their demands for a CTB first and foremost on proliferation concerns. Not being able to test their weapons through explosions, the representatives of the Islamic Republic reasoned, NWS would find it hard to develop new types of nuclear armaments, which, in turn, would slow down the nuclear arms race and strengthen international peace and security. In addition to pointing to the CTB's role in blocking vertical nuclear proliferation, Iran underscored the importance of such a ban in preventing the spread of nuclear armaments to additional countries. Without testing, Iranian officials argued, it would be difficult for non-nuclear states to develop a nuclear weapon. (CD/PV.45, 1979: 11; NPT/CONF.II/C.1/2, 1980: 4 and CD/PV.404, 1987: 3)

International efforts to ban nuclear tests had largely began as a result of the widespread concern that the radioactive fall-out from nuclear explosions would pose a serious risk to human health. Although the signing of the so-called Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 (PTBT) – which banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere, outer space, and under water[47] – had markedly reduced the concerns over the health consequences of nuclear testing, the health factor continued to be used as an argument against nuclear explosions and it also coloured the Islamic Republic's diplomatic pronouncements. Should nuclear tests go on unabated, Iranian officials maintained, hundreds of thousands of people would prematurely die due to the effects of radiation. The Iranians pointed to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident as a warning to the international community, even if the accident must have raised questions in Iran itself about the safety and rationality of the Islamic Republic's own nuclear program. Nevertheless, Iranian authorities were careful not to link the post-Chernobyl international debate on nuclear safety with their own nuclear plans. Instead, they claimed that radioactive releases from nuclear weapons and nuclear tests posed a far greater danger than civilian facilities' accidental releases. Finally, the Iranians representatives stated on many occasions that nuclear weapons tests constituted a threat not only to human health, but also to the natural environment as well as to the world's climatic equilibrium. (Loeb 1993: 828, 834; A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 12 and GC/SPL.I/OR.4, 1986: 20)

Stressing that nuclear tests gave rise to the feeling of insecurity throughout the world, the Islamic Republic joined those who called for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would be of unlimited duration and attract the widest possible adherence. Iran pointed out to the nuclear powers that a clear majority of the members of the UN supported such a ban. By referring to the preamble of the NPT, the Iranians also maintained that NWS had in fact already committed themselves to the creation of a CTBT.[48] Like other NNWS, Iran viewed test ban negotiations as a symbol of how devoted NWS were to nuclear disarmament and how seriously they were complying with article VI of the NPT. Moreover, the representatives of the Islamic Republic raised the question of verification – the most contentious issue in the CTBT talks – and argued that there were enough technical means available to ensure the effective verification of states' compliance with the planned treaty. However, as nuclear tests continued to take place and the prospects for a speedy conclusion of a CTB remained distant, the Iranians called on NWS to agree, as an interim measure, on a nuclear test moratorium that would be immediately put into effect.[49] (NPT/CONF.II/C.1/2, 1980: 4–7; CD/PV.45, 1979: 11 and A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 12)

Beside the subject of nuclear testing, the Islamic Republic also touched upon other questions that were directly related to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, such as the issue of security assurances. The Iranians presented themselves as strong backers of the non-nuclear states' effort to receive assurances from the nuclear powers that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against NNWS. This effort dated back to the time when the negotiations on the NPT had been under way and based on the argument, also voiced by the Islamic Republic, that NNWS were entitled to security assurances in return for giving up the nuclear weapons option.[50] (CD/PV.61, 1980: 10; NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121 and NPT/CONF.II/C.I/SR.7, 1980: 202)

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[47] Iran had signed the PTBT on 8 August 1963 and deposited its ratification instruments on 5 May 1964.

[48] The preamble of the NPT reads that the countries concluding the treaty "seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end."

[49] The issue of a comprehensive nuclear test moratorium gained momentum in the mid-1980s as a result of the changes in the composition of the Soviet leadership. Following the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union made a number of diplomatic initiatives regarding a multilateral nuclear test moratorium, in addition to which the Soviets declared to be bound by a unilateral test moratorium. Iran supported the steps taken by the Soviet Union and criticized the U.S. administration of president Reagan for not having positively responded to them. (Loeb 1993: 840–841; CD/PV.379, 1986: 7 and GC/SPL.I/OR.4, 1986: 21)

[50] Deliberations on security assurances have historically revolved around two key concepts. The term 'negative security assurances' (NSA) refers to pledges made by nuclear powers that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. The term 'positive security assurances' (PSA),

It was only natural, Iranian officials maintained, that the Islamic Republic attached great importance to the issue of security assurances, for pending the realization of complete nuclear disarmament, Iran and other non-nuclear states had to try to find ways to protect themselves from the threat of nuclear weapons. In addition to pointing to the security benefits of such assurances, the Iranians argued that the incorporation of negative security assurances into the NPT as a legally binding NWS obligation would make the treaty more equitable as well as more attractive in the eyes of those countries that had not joined it.[51] (CD/PV.404, 1987: 4; CD/PV.425, 1987: 6 and NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121)

Although the Iranians specifically referred to NSA that would be incorporated into the NPT, they did not seem to rule out the option that such assurances would alternatively be given in the form of a separate document or declaration. Iran only insisted that NSA would have to be legally binding and contain no interpretative loopholes. As a result, the Islamic Republic declared the unilateral statements hitherto made by individual nuclear states to the effect that they would not use nuclear weapons first as too ambiguous and too weak to satisfy the security needs of NNWS.[52] (CD/PV.45, 1979: 13; NPT/CONF.II/C.1/SR.7, 1980: 202)

In the same vein, the Islamic Republic dismissed the positive security assurances given by the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom in 1968 in the form of the UN Security Council Resolution 255 as inadequate. The resolution had three major shortcomings of which Iran and other NNWS were well aware. First, it only expressed the nuclear powers' ambiguous pledge to "provide or support immediate assistance in accordance with the UN Charter" to a NNWS subjected to an aggression with nuclear weapons. Secondly, the 1968 resolution offered the nuclear powers the theoretical opportunity to exercise their veto as permanent members of the Security

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in turn, points to pledges made by nuclear powers that they will provide assistance or come to the aid of any non-nuclear country that has been attacked or threatened with nuclear armaments. Bunn and Timerbaev (1993: 11) have crystallized the non-nuclear states' approach to the issue of security assurances into the form of a question: "If we agree not to get nuclear weapons, will you agree not to attack or threaten us with them and to come to our aid if someone else does so?" Following the general course of the international diplomatic debate at the time, the remarks made by the Islamic Republic on security assurances mostly focused on NSA.

[51] Underscoring the link between NSA and the NPT, the Islamic Republic implied that NSA should be given only to non-nuclear states that had joined the NPT (NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 120).

[52] The United States, for example, had promised in 1978 that it would not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT or any comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, "except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by any state allied to a nuclear-weapon state or associated with a nuclear-weapon state in carrying out or sustaining the attack" (Bunn and Timerbaev 1993: 13).

Council in cases where the council was requested to act against nuclear threats posed by the three pledging countries themselves. The final problem with the resolution was that two nuclear powers, France and China, had never joined it. (NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121; NPT/CONF.II/C.1/SR. 7, 1980: 202 and Bunn and Timerbaev 1993: 11–12)

5.1.3 The Islamic Republic and regional nuclear arms control

5.1.3.1 The support for nuclear-weapon-free zones[53]

Post-revolutionary Iran's categorical opposition to nuclear weapons served as the starting-point for its approaches to issues dealing with regional nuclear arms control as well. The Islamic Republic's strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world was a case in point. Just like their predecessors in the Shah's administration, the officials of the Islamic Republic viewed NWFZ as important elements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and as political and legal shields against nuclear aggression. The Iranians expressed their country's support for existing NWFZ – that is, for the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco that established a NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as for the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga which created a NWFZ in the South Pacific[54] – and called on governments to agree on the formation of additional zones. (CD/PV.45, 1979: 12; NPT/CONF.II/C.1/SR.7, 1980: 202 and A/C.I/42/PV.17, 1987: 13)

Naturally, the Islamic Republic's NWFZ diplomacy focused, above all, on the region of the Middle East. By adopting the 1974 initiative made by the Shah administration for the establishment of a NWFZ in the region, post-revolutionary Iran's policy-makers had a diplomatic tool available to be used in support of their demand for a nuclear-free Middle East, even if it should be noted that the Shah administration's 1974 proposal had been rather unspecific in terms of content.[55] It had only stated the need for a Middle Eastern NWFZ, concluded that the UN General Assembly was the most suitable forum

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[53] The term 'nuclear-weapon-free zone' refers to a geographically defined area in which nuclear weapons may not be manufactured or produced. Other basic characteristics generally associated with the term include the prohibition of importation of nuclear armaments into the zone by a country that belongs to the zone as well as the principles that nuclear-weapon states do not station or store nuclear armaments within the borders of any zonal country and that they provide a guarantee neither to use nor threaten to use nuclear weapons against the countries that form the zone. (Redick 1993: 1079)

[54] For the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the NWFZ in the South Pacific, see ibid. (1993: 1081–1085) and the relevant articles in *Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the 21st Century* (1997).

for diplomatic deliberations on the subject, and asked the General Assembly to conduct the precise delimitation of such a zone – in other words, to define the countries belonging to it.[56] (Karem 1988: 91–92)

Iran's tendency not to elaborate on the modalities of a Middle Eastern NWFZ had continued even after the introduction of the 1974 initiative[57] and eventually became a trait of the post-Pahlavi regime's diplomacy, too. During the Islamic Republic's first decade, Iranian authorities merely expressed their support for the establishment of a regional NWFZ, referred to the overwhelming popularity the idea was enjoying among the members of the UN, and welcomed diplomatic initiatives that would contribute to the creation of the zone. As a result of the Islamic Republic's half-hearted approach to the zone question, the diplomatic lead in the matter started to increasingly fall into the hands of Egypt, the co-sponsor of Iran's 1974 initiative at the UN. (A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 13 and NPT/CONF.II/C.1/SR.7, 1980: 202)

In a similar manner, the lack of elaboration characterized the Islamic Republic's war-time call, made in 1986, for a nuclear-weapon-free Persian Gulf sub-region. The Iranian proposal did not go beyond the basic notion that the Persian Gulf should remain free from nuclear weapons and that the regional governments should take diplomatic steps in the matter (A/41/PV.19, 1986: 122). The Islamic Republic's 1986 call, made at a time

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[55] Chubin and Zabih (1974: 303) imply that the Shah administration's initiative for the denuclearization of the Middle East was suggestive of diplomatic improvisation rather than a product of thorough analysis.

[56] Iran presented its NWFZ initiative to the UN General Assembly in 1974 – the initiative was co-sponsored by Egypt – but the Shah's government had made a call for the establishment of such a zone at least as early as in 1970 (A/PV.1857, 1970: 5). In its July 1974 explanatory memorandum to the General Assembly, Iran stated that its NWFZ initiative should be given urgent consideration because "greater access by states to nuclear technology has rendered the danger of nuclear weapons proliferation, and a concomitant collapse of the non-proliferation structure, a more acute problem" (cited in Karem 1988: 91–92). It has been argued that the Shah's NWFZ proposal was tabled mainly as a response to Israel's nuclear weapons program and to reports that Israel had armed nuclear weapons during the 1973 Yom Kippur War (ibid.: 93; Arnett 1998a: 443 and Zak 2002: 62–63). Iran's official statement made at the first NPT review conference in May 1975, which underscored the danger of one or more Middle Eastern countries developing nuclear weapons, supports the conclusion that the ramifications of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons were a central concern to Iranian authorities and thereby played a crucial role in the 1974 proposal (NPT/CONF/C.I/SR.11, 1975: 3). The Shah himself shed light on the rationale for his administration's NWFZ initiative by stating the following: "[...] I believe this course of nuclear armament [in the Middle East] is ridiculous. What are they trying to do? Do they intend to use it against the great powers? It would never be possible to achieve parity. Are we going to kill ourselves with it? The country that procures this medium for attacking others will not wait long before being smashed by another country that has utilized this medium beforehand" (cited in Cottrell and Dougherty 1977: 38).

[57] The Iranians had only alluded to the following requirements that are matters of course in any serious NWFZ scheme. First of all, they had emphasized that the formation of a Middle Eastern NWFZ should be based on the initiative of the regional states. Secondly, they had pointed out that the zone should be respected and supported by external states and especially by NWS who should also pledge that they would never use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the countries forming the zone. Finally, the Shah's officials had noted that the NWFZ should include effective measures for verification. (NPT/CONF/35/I, 1975: 21; NPT/CONF/C.II/SR.5, 1975: 7 and NPT/CONF/SR.4, 1975: 13)

when Iranian officials were trying to sell the idea of an indigenous Gulf security system,[58] was closely related to Iran's view that extra-regional military presence in the Gulf was unacceptable and that regional cooperation independent of the Cold War blocs of the East and the West was an indispensable way of furthering the cause of nuclear disarmament (CD/PV.404, 1987: 5).

In addition to supporting the establishment of denuclearized zones in the Middle East and elsewhere, the Islamic Republic endorsed the creation of zones of peace throughout the world.[59] As a littoral state, Iran had a particular interest in international efforts, led by the non-aligned countries, that aimed for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The Islamic Republic argued that the issue deserved urgent diplomatic attention and criticized the major powers for standing in the way of the creation of a zone of peace in the area.[60] (A/36/PV.26, 1981: 121; A/38/PV.13, 1983: 191 and A/S-15/PV.3, 1988: 49)

5.1.3.2 Iran's condemnation of Israel's and South Africa's nuclear activities

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation on regional nuclear arms control included specific verbal attacks against two countries with whom post-Pahlavi Iran had – due to ideological reasons – cut off official relations: Israel and South Africa. According to the authorities of the Islamic Republic, there were strong indications that both countries were developing nuclear weapons and actually already possessed them.[61] In the Iranian view, the possession of nuclear armaments by the two "racist and aggressive powers"[62] posed a major threat to regional as well as to international peace

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[58] See above section 3.3.4.

[59] The notion of a zone of peace encompasses a NWFZ but is more comprehensive, for not only pointing to disarmament measures, it covers inter-state cooperation in non-military fields as well. Moreover, armaments limitations within a zone of peace are not restricted to nuclear weapons and other WMD, but also include conventional arms control steps. For a detailed description of the various elements of a zone of peace, see Redick (1993: 1088).

[60] Also see above the discussion in sections 3.1.3 and 3.3.4.

[61] For Iranian claims to this effect, see A/C.1/34/PV.20 (1979: 56); NPT/CONF.II/SR.12 (1980: 121) and GC/XXIX/OR.280 (1985: 13). While initially rejecting all suggestions that it was pursuing nuclear weapons, South Africa ultimately officially acknowledged, in March 1993, that it had developed a "limited nuclear deterrent capability" in the 1970s and 1980s. Israel, on the other hand, finished the development phase of its first nuclear bomb in 1966–67 and had an operational, even if a rudimentary, nuclear arms capability on the eve of the Six-Day War of June 1967. From 1970 onwards, it has been commonly assumed that Israel is a de facto nuclear-weapon state. (Stumpf 1995: 3 and Cohen 1998: 1)

[62] Iranian representatives also regularly alluded to reports claiming that Israel and South Africa were clandestinely collaborating with each other in the nuclear field (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 56; NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 35–36). Analysts have held differing views about the extent of Israeli-South African nuclear cooperation. Drake (2002: 161, 175), for example,

and security. Not only did Israeli and South African nuclear weapons endanger the health, security, and prosperity of the whole mankind and of the African and Middle Eastern people, in particular, the Islamic Republic's argument went, they increased the threat of regional nuclear arms races and thereby the possibility of disastrous nuclear confrontations as well. Israel's and South Africa's nuclear ambitions, combined with their reluctance to join the NPT and to accept the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA, Iranian officials added, stood in the way of the establishment of NWFZ in Africa and the Middle East.[63] (GC/XXXI/OR.301, 1987: 8; GC/XXIX.OR.271, 1985: 35–36 and NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121)

In the Islamic Republic's analysis, Israel's and South Africa's interest in nuclear weapons was rooted in their intention to use such capabilities as a tool for "oppressive" military and foreign policies. The goal of a regional military superiority, Iranian authorities asserted, essentially steered the Israeli and South African nuclear policies. Both countries, the officials of the Islamic Republic underscored, also considered nuclear arms as a source of state power that could be translated into a diplomatic asset. Thus, the Iranians concluded, Israel and South Africa sought to utilize their status as nuclear powers for the purpose of "territorial expansion and hegemony" as well as for "political blackmail." (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 35; NPT/CONF.II/SR.12, 1980: 121 and NPT/CONF.II/C.I/SR.7, 1980: 202)

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maintains that Israel conducted a joint nuclear test with South Africa in 1979, whereas Feldman (1997: 45) concludes that "while Israel and South Africa cooperated in a number of sensitive ventures, they have probably not cooperated in the nuclear realm." According to Adeniji (2002: 38–39), however, documents of a secret court trial held in South Africa in 1989 testified to that country's extensive collaboration with Israel in regards to nuclear materials and technology. It is interesting to note in this connection that while the post-Pahlavi Iranian regime must have been well informed of Israel's conventional arms transfers to Iran during the Shah years, the Islamic Republic's Israel-related remarks made no mention of the Shah administration's cooperation with Israel in the development of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The Islamic Republic's silence in the matter seems to have been intentional, for, as noted by Parsi (2007: 76), Iranian officials later contacted the Shah's general, now residing in the United States, who had been in charge of the missile project in order to convince him to share the details of the Iranian–Israeli cooperation. However, the general rejected the request made by the authorities of the Islamic Republic. For the details of the Iranian–Israeli missile project, which was sealed in an agreement signed by the two parties in April 1977, see Sick (1991: 62–63) and Parsi (2007: 74–76).

[63] The 1964 declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for the creation of a NWFZ in Africa made Africa the first region to formally aim at regional denuclearization (Buo 1993: 17). Due to South Africa's unwillingness to denounce nuclear weapons, however, it was not until 1996 that the goal of an African NWFZ ultimately materialized. For the negotiating history and the details of the Treaty of Pelindaba which established a NWFZ in Africa, see Adeniji (2002: 35–162). As far as Israel was concerned, the Israeli government expressed, in October 1980, its support for the concept of a NWFZ in the Middle East. Nonetheless, Israeli authorities made it clear that the terms of such an arrangement would have to be based on direct Israeli-Arab negotiations. By coupling its interest in a Middle Eastern NWFZ with negotiations with Arab governments, Israel wanted to let it be known that without Arab states' acceptance of the Jewish state, they would not discuss the possibility of giving up their nuclear capabilities. (Feldman 1997: 249–250)

Strongly condemning Israeli and South African nuclear efforts, Iran made repeated diplomatic calls for the application of stringent international measures – formulated either within the UN or the IAEA – to stop and roll back those activities.[64] As a preliminary step, Iranian officials called on the major powers to publicize the information they had about the two countries' nuclear programs, so that international discussions on them could be conducted in a comprehensive and thorough manner. As far as practical arms control measures were concerned, the Islamic Republic asked governments to immediately terminate all nuclear cooperation with Israel and South Africa – unless the two regimes decided to join the NPT and to accept IAEA full-scope safeguards. All countries, nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear countries alike, Iranian officials declared, should refrain from assisting, encouraging, or inducing the Israelis and the South Africans to manufacture or acquire nuclear armaments. (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 56; A/C.1/42/PV.17, 1987: 14–15 and NPT/CONF.II/C.I/2, 1980: 2)

Moreover, the Iranians questioned the legitimacy of the two countries' participation in the activities of international organizations, such as the IAEA. Basically, as the president of the AEOI pointed out to the general conference of the IAEA in September 1987, the Islamic Republic considered the mere existence of both regimes "unfounded and illegal." Hence, Islamic Iran's politico-ideological mission against Israel and South Africa led Iranian officials to make calls, depending on the occasion, for the suspension of Israel's and South Africa's diplomatic privileges and rights in the IAEA as well as even for the expulsion of the two countries from the agency.[65] (GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 6–7; GC/XXVII/OR.256, 1983: 11 and GC/XXX/OR.292, 1986: 4)

The poor success of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic efforts in regards to Israel and South Africa led Iranian officials to blame other governments and the United States, in particular, for their disappointments. According to Iranian authorities, the United States,

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[64] The subjects of South African and Israeli nuclear armament were regularly discussed in the UN General Assembly. The Islamic Republic strongly backed the diplomatic efforts of the African nations, led by Nigeria, to draw international attention to South Africa's nuclear program. Similarly, the Iranians supported diplomatic deliberations on Israel's nuclear armament, a topic that was included in the General Assembly's agenda in 1979 at the request of Iraq. (A/C.1/34/PV.20, 1979: 56; NPT/CONF.II/C.I/SR.7, 1980: 203 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1979*, 1982: 43)

[65] As another sign of the Islamic Republic's uncompromising diplomatic line at the IAEA, take, for example, the Iranian statement of 3 October 1986 in which Iran's IAEA representative noted that if the nuclear facilities of Israel and South Africa were not placed under IAEA full-scope safeguards before the next session of the agency's general conference, his country would demand, as a short-term solution, the disapproval of the budget of the IAEA's safeguards department. In the Iranian view, the agency's inability to pressure Israel and South Africa to accept such safeguards would testify to the organization's ineffectiveness. (GC/XXX/OR.291, 1986: 9)

the "real cause of unrest all over the world," objected to even the slightest criticism of Israeli and South African policies that openly defied world opinion. Given that the United States acted as the guardian of the two regimes, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, the Americans, together with their Western allies, would be held responsible for Israel's and South Africa's aggressions. That these two regimes continued to be supported by the United States, the country that had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Iranian authorities claimed, proved, in its own right, that Israeli and South African nuclear efforts were intended for military purposes. (GC/XXX/OR.292, 1986: 4; GC/XXVII/OR.256, 1983: 16 and GC/XXXI/OR.301, 1987: 8)

5.1.4 The Islamic Republic and attacks on nuclear facilities

5.1.4.1 The bombings of Osirak

As far as the 1980–1988 war between Iran and Iraq was concerned, nuclear weapons were not of direct relevance to the conflict. Still, by the time of the war's commencement in September 1980, the Iraqis had been working on a military nuclear program for almost a decade (Baram 2001: 26–28), whereas the post-revolutionary Iranian regime had just inherited the Shah's ambitious nuclear power program which had been widely regarded as a stepping stone to an Iranian nuclear weapons capability. At the onset of the war, then, the fear of a nuclear weapon in the hands of their enemy lived in the minds of both Iranian and Iraqi decision-makers. The officials of the Islamic Republic, for example, subsequently admitted that the possibility of Iraq getting hold of a nuclear weapon and actually using it against their country was a scenario the Iranians could not rule out in the course of the war.[66]

In fact, it did not take a long time for Iran to act on its worries about Iraq's nuclear capabilities. On 30 September 1980, only about a week after the start of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic launched an air raid against the Iraqi 40-MW nuclear research

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[66] Author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, the Islamic Republic`s war-time resident representative to the IAEA, Geneva, 22 July 2002. At the beginning of the 1980s, the estimates about the time Iraq would need to build a nuclear weapon ranged from one to ten years (<www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm>).

reactor known as Osirak located at Tuwaitha near Baghdad.[67] Although the extent of the damage caused by the two Iranian F-4 Phantom bombers – which composed a part of a group of Iranian aircraft attacking an electric power plant in the environs of Baghdad – has been a matter of speculation, the fact that the Israeli air force carried out a bombing mission at the same Iraqi nuclear site on 7 June 1981 suggests that Iran's September 1980 attack was not militarily successful.[68] (O'Ballance 1988: 45 and <www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm>)

While it is hard to say how much intelligence the Islamic Republic had on Iraq's nuclear efforts prior to its strike against Osirak, it is clear that Iranian authorities viewed the Tuwaitha reactor as a crucial component of Iraq's effort to obtain a nuclear weapons capability and therefore sought to militarily delay the Iraqi regime's nuclear activities. This was certainly the conclusion Israel had drawn on the eve of their June 1981 air raid against Osirak.[69] The 1981 bombing of Osirak turned out to be a military success, for the eight Israeli warplanes carrying out the mission managed to fully destroy the reactor and to easily escape the Iraqi airspace. The Israeli air attack constituted a significant blow to Iraq's nuclear program and must have been a cause of major relief to the Iranian leadership.

In public, however, there were no traces of Iranian satisfaction. Portraying and viewing itself as the champion of the Muslim world, the Islamic Republic took diplomatic advantage of the situation and adopted a highly critical stance against Israel in the international deliberations that followed the June 1981 incident. Strongly condemning the bombing of Osirak, the Iranians said that even though the target of the Israeli attack had been Iraq, the country which had invaded Iran and whose destructive

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[67] The Tuwaitha reactor was a type of French reactor named after Osiris, the Egyptian god of the dead. The French supplier renamed the Iraqi facility Osirak by mixing the name Osiris with that of the recipient state. Iraqi authorities themselves, however, referred to the reactor as Tammuz after the name of the month of the Ba'th party revolution of 1968 and the Sumero-Akkadian god of fertility and rebirth. (<www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm> and Baram 2001: 28)

[68] According to the Federation of American Scientists, the damages caused by the Iranian combat aircraft were only minor (<www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm>). Iraqi authorities made a similar claim immediately after the September 1980 incident. Referring to French eyewitness accounts and Iraqi sources, however, O'Ballance (1988: 45) maintains that the Iranian raid caused serious damages at the site and led to purges within the Iraqi military.

[69] For the details of the Israeli raid, known as Operation Babylon, and for a discussion of the factors that led the government of prime minister Menachem Begin to conclude that Osirak posed a direct threat to Israel's security and had to be urgently destroyed through a pre-emptive strike, see Shlaim (1999: 384–387) and Feldman (1982: 115–121). Interestingly, the chief of intelligence of the Israeli Army had reportedly urged Iran to bomb Osirak soon after the Iran–Iraq war had broken out in September 1980. Some have claimed that Iran's Osirak operation of September 1980 had actually been conducted with Israeli assistance and intelligence. Conversely, some sources have suggested that Israel's raid against the

war policy had been continuously ignored by the international community, the Islamic Republic held to its ideological principles and aimed to further the cause of justice in the matter. In the Iranian characterization, the "shameful and despicable" bombing of Osirak was a flagrant violation of the basic norms of international law, an act that could not be legitimized in any circumstances, irrespective of the purpose the reactor was serving.[70] (CD/PV.130, 1981: 30–31; A/C.1/36/PV.24, 1981: 38–40 and GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 29)

Iranian officials argued that the Israeli air raid was not only an attack against the Muslim people of Iraq, but also an act of violence against the umma, the whole of the Islamic community.[71] In this sense, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, the Israeli operation was in line with and indeed another manifestation of the aggressive anti-Muslim policies of the "Zionist regime" that was implementing the imperialistic objectives of the United States in the Middle East. In addition to performing their obligatory criticism of Israel and the United States, as well as reminding the two countries of the futility of any effort to drive a wedge into the diplomatic front formed by the Islamic countries in the Osirak issue, the Iranians were nonetheless careful not to give the impression that their government was siding with the regime of Saddam Hussein in the matter. Pointing out that their government's diplomatic stance on the Osirak incident was about fulfilling a religious duty, Iranian officials stated that it was highly ironic that the Osirak case had led the Iraqi regime, composed of war criminals, to deliver statements which called on all governments to refrain from the use or the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of states. (A/38/PV.42, 1983: 685; GC/XXVIII/OR.267, 1984: 12 and A/36/PV.52, 1981: 921)

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic activities in the Osirak matter were partly steered by the Iranian concern that the air raid might have been indicative of a new Israeli

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Iraqi reactor made use of Iranian intelligence data. (<www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm>; Parsi 2005 and Sick 1991: 207)

[70] Specifically, Iranian officials referred to the attack as a breach against the principles of the UN Charter, that is, against the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of states as well as against the principle of non-use of force in international relations. As for the Israelis, they justified their attack by pointing out that international law and article 51 of the UN Charter, in particular, allowed states to engage in acts of self-defence (<www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/facility/osiraq.htm>).

[71] As stated by an Iranian representative at the UN in November 1985: "The military attack by the Zionist base of terror occupying Palestine is from our point of view of exactly the same criminal status as the attacks against Lebanon, Tunisia or the Islamic Republic of Iran." Iranian talk of the Israeli violation of Iraq's "Islamic airspace" or the Iranian characterizations of Israel's bombing of Osirak as an attack on the property of the umma serve as further examples of Iran's effort to 'Islamize' the Osirak incident. (A/40/PV.59, 1985: 38–41 and A/41/PV.51, 1986: 56)

security doctrine underscoring the importance of military self-help and pre-emption.[72] As a country interested in the application of nuclear energy and openly declaring its contempt of the Jewish state, Iran asked what guarantees there were that Israel would not bomb peaceful nuclear facilities in other countries as well.[73] Worried about Israel's military intentions, the Islamic Republic called for tough international measures against that country in relevant international organizations. At the IAEA, for example, Iran found the agency's strong condemnation of the attack on Osirak insufficient and demanded the expulsion of Israel from the organization, a position that was initially shared by many other Middle Eastern governments as well.[74] (GC/XXVI/OR.242, 1982: 29; GC/XXVIII/OR.267, 1984: 12 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 5–6)

Even though Israel's attack against Osirak was criticized even by the United States, the strongest ally of Israel, the Americans sought to ensure that the ensuing diplomatic steps taken against Israel would not turn out to be as severe as those suggested by countries like Iran. The officials of the Islamic Republic were aware of the U.S. effort and sought to obstruct it. Thus, for example, Iranian representatives declared that if the United States tried to use its financial leverage as a deterrent against Israel's expulsion from the IAEA, the Islamic Republic would be ready to give extra financial support to the agency so that the loss of U.S. contributions could be compensated for in the short term. As a long-term solution to the problem, Iranian officials referred to a proposal made by Ali Khamenei, the president of the Islamic Republic, and called for the establishment of a special NAM fund that would allocate financial contributions to the IAEA and hence free the agency from "imperialist domination." (GC/XXVII/OR.253, 1983: 16–17)

5.1.4.2 Iraq's war-time attacks on Bushehr

But it was not only the Israelis – or the Iranians, for that matter – who translated their fears about their enemy's nuclear intentions into concrete military action. On 24 March

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[72] The Iranian concern was fuelled by those Israeli commentators who viewed the Osirak incident as a manifestation of a new military doctrine adopted by prime minister Menachem Begin. Speaking of a "Begin doctrine," they referred to Israel's determination not to allow its enemies to construct nuclear reactors capable of manufacturing armaments that might be used against Israel. (Feldman 1997: 109)

[73] To retain the coherence of their argument in this context, the representatives of the Islamic Republic claimed that contrary to Israeli claims, the destroyed Iraqi reactor had been intended only for peaceful purposes (A/41/PV.51, 1986: 57–60).

[74] For the international diplomatic debate that followed Israel's Operation Babylon, see Feldman (1982: 127–141).

1984, Iraq launched an attack on the Bushehr nuclear reactor site in Iran. The 1984 missile raid, which marked the first of a series of altogether six Iraqi attacks against Bushehr during the Iran–Iraq war (Koch and Wolf 1997: 127),[75] was characterized by Iranian authorities as a criminal act not less deplorable than Israel's bombing of Osirak. In fact, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, it was the international community's tame response to the June 1981 Osirak incident that had induced and encouraged Iraq to imitate Israel (CD/PV.283, 1984: 42 and GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 6).

Following the March 1984 attack, which did not produce significant damages at the Bushehr site, Iranian authorities called on governments to agree on international regulations that would prohibit armed attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes. More specifically, the Islamic Republic notified the IAEA of the Iraqi attack and asked the agency's board of governors to hold an extraordinary meeting on the issue. Also, the Iranians wanted the matter to be placed on the agenda of the board of governors' regular session as well as asked the IAEA's director-general to send a fact-finding team to Bushehr to verify the damages caused by the Iraqi raid. (CD/PV.286, 1984: 26; GC/XXVIII/OR.260, 1984: 6 and Etemad 1987: 224)

That the Iranian requests were turned down by the IAEA was a major disappointment to the Islamic Republic. According to the agency's director-general, the verification of war damage and losses in respect to nuclear plants that were still under construction, did not contain radioactive material, and were not yet subject to IAEA safeguards did not fall under the agency's competence. This argument was repeated by the IAEA after the Iraqi attacks of February and March 1985 on Bushehr had taken place and after the Iranians had launched another round of diplomatic activities in the matter.[76] This time, after it had become clear that Iraq's targeting of Bushehr was part of its war planning, however, the Islamic Republic had not only repeated the requests made to the IAEA in 1984, but also demanded the expulsion of Iraq from the agency and asked the member states to make every possible effort to prevent the recurrence of further military attacks

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[75] The attacks against Bushehr took place on 24 March 1984; 12 February and 4 March 1985; 12 July 1986; and 17 and 19 November 1987. In the fall of 1985, at the IAEA as well as at the third review conference of the NPT, the Islamic Republic informed that Iraq had, in three separate raids, also targeted Iran's nuclear research facilities in Tehran (GC/XXIX/OR.272, 1985: 40 and NPT/CONF.III/SR.16, 1985: 203).

[76] According to official Iranian information, Iraq's February 1985 attack against Bushehr killed one site staff member and caused some material damage to the Bushehr-1 plant. The March 1985 incident did not produce casualties, but the material losses, the Iranians compared, were much more extensive than in February. (NPT/CONF.III/SR.16, 1985: 199)

against Iranian nuclear facilities.[77] (GOV/INF/471/Att. 21, 1985: 1; GOV/INF/471/Att. 13, 1985: 1 and GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 38)

In 1985, Iran stepped up its Iraq-related diplomatic efforts outside the IAEA as well. At the third NPT review conference, held in August–September that year, the Iranians stated that the Islamic Republic's concern over Iraq's attacks should be documented in the conference's final declaration. The Iranians hoped that the conference would "strongly deplore" the attacks conducted by Iraq and urge all the states parties to provide necessary technical assistance to any NPT member whose peaceful nuclear facilities had been subjected to military attack so that its peaceful program could be restored and the damages suffered overcome.[78] (NPT/CONF.III/C.III/SR.6, 1985: 376; NPT/CONF.III/L.5, 1985: 1 and NPT/CONF.III/SR.16, 1985: 199, 203)

Iran was prepared to employ tough diplomatic tactics at the review conference in order to achieve its objectives. During the four-week conference's last session, the Islamic Republic still insisted that the final declaration should make an explicit reference to the Iraqi attacks. In the course of earlier negotiations on the declaration, Iran's delegates had agreed to go along with a draft text reading that the "Conference notes that the Islamic Republic of Iran states its concern regarding attacks on its nuclear facilities." Given that even this softened Iranian formulation – which was strongly opposed by the Iraqi delegation – met resistance at the conference, the Islamic Republic bitterly let it be known that its acceptance of the final declaration would be dependent on the fate of Iran's text proposal. In the last minute, however, Iranian delegates recognized the limits of their diplomatic leverage and yielded to a compromise solution that saved the consensus needed for the final declaration's approval. According to the compromise reached, Iran withdrew its text proposal, in return of which the Islamic Republic's statement at the conference's final session, together with that of Iraq, was attached to the final declaration. (*Statement by the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran* 1985: 1–2; NPT/CONF.III/SR.16, 1985: 199–203 and Etemad 1987: 225)

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[77] Following Iraq's 1985 attacks, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that Iraq was deliberately targeting Iran's ability to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As put by the Iranians, "there were no significant military objectives to be achieved by attacking the [Bushehr] area or its surroundings" (NPT/CONF.III/SR.16, 1985: 199).

[78] In a paradoxical diplomatic twist of events, the Iranians made the latter proposal by referring to a draft text originally put forth by the Iraqi delegation whose proposal had been directed against Israel (NPT/CONF.III/L.5, 1985: 1).

The diplomatic setbacks encountered by the Iranians in 1984 and 1985 led them to strongly criticize the international community for its approach to the Iraqi attacks. By failing to take measures in a matter that constituted an offence against Iran and states' universal right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the Iranian argument went, governments had encouraged Iraq to continue its attacks and thereby allowed the Iraqis to undermine the credibility of international organizations.[79] In Iranian authorities' view, the international community's insubstantial response to Iraq's attacks against Bushehr was another manifestation of the way in which governments were letting the regime of Saddam Hussein execute criminal acts against the Islamic Republic in the Iran–Iraq war. (GOV/INF/471/Att. 20, 1985: 1; GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 36–37 and CD/PV.308, 1985: 12)

Pointing their fingers specifically at the IAEA, Iranian officials questioned the agency's ability to carry out its responsibility to protect peaceful nuclear activities. Asking whether the IAEA's reluctance to act in the matter of Iraq was the result of the agency's organizational weaknesses or outright political discrimination against the Islamic Republic, Iranian representatives asserted that the IAEA had done their country wrong all the same. The agency's inaction, the Iranians added, had left their government no other choice than to regard the IAEA as a party to the Iraqi crimes and to draw the conclusion that peaceful nuclear installations that were still under construction were not protected against armed attacks, that nuclear installations were considered peaceful only if they were already subject to IAEA safeguards, and finally, that nuclear installations not under those safeguards were not protected against armed attacks, irrespective of the radiological hazards potentially resulting from such attacks. (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 36; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1985*, 1989: 249 and GOV/INF/471/Att. 20, 1985: 2)

In February 1987, Iran began to transfer fissionable material to the Bushehr site. The purpose of the Iranian action was to undermine the IAEA's argument that because of the lack radioactive material at Bushehr, there were no sufficient grounds for the agency to respond to the Iraqi attacks.[80] Thus, following Iraq's November 1987 strikes against

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[79] The Iranians stated, among others, that Iraq's attacks posed a serious threat to the role and activities of the IAEA in the development and promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes (GOV/INF/471/Att. 7, 1985: 2).

[80] Prior to the start of Iran's nuclear material transfers to Bushehr, the Islamic Republic had countered the IAEA's argument by saying that the agency should take action against Iraq because Iran was a member of the NPT and had accepted the IAEA's full-scope safeguards. Moreover, Iranian representatives had pointed out that had their country's peaceful nuclear program been internationally allowed to proceed as

Bushehr, Iranian officials asked the IAEA to send a fact-finding team as well as nuclear safety and radiation protection experts to the site.[81] This time, the IAEA did not rule out the provision of assistance to the Islamic Republic, even though it asked Iranian authorities to first provide the agency with information about the nature and the quantity of the nuclear material stored at Bushehr so that the type of proper assistance could be determined. (Cordesman and Wagner 1990: 521 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 223, 230)

From the Iranian standpoint, however, the IAEA's response came ultimately too late. Iraq's November 1987 strikes against Bushehr caused major damage to the site's reactors and seriously hampered the execution of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. Although Iraq did not manage to destroy the crucial equipment and components reserved for the reactors – they were not stored at the site –, it was estimated at the time that the repairing of the Bushehr-1 unit alone would cost some $3–5 billion. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 230 and Koch and Wolf 1997: 127). In the light of Israel's June 1981 air raid against Osirak and Iraq's repeated war-time attacks on Bushehr, thus, it was not surprising that Iran became one of the staunchest supporters of an international convention that would prohibit armed attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes (CD/PV.404, 1987: 8; GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 7 and GC/XXXI/COM.5/OR.55, 1987: 10).

5.2 From the Cease-Fire to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty

5.2.1 The basics of the Islamic Republic's post-war nuclear argumentation

5.2.1.1 The call for complete nuclear disarmament

After the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq war and the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, the officials of the Islamic Republic stepped up their diplomatic efforts in the area of nuclear arms control. As the military threat posed by Iraq had lost its urgency, the Iranians were able

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planned, the Bushehr-1 plant would have already come under IAEA safeguards. In other words, the IAEA should have taken into account that the facts on the ground it was alluding to had been created by foreign actors and not by Iran itself. (GC/XXIX/OR.271, 1985: 37)

[81] According to Iran, nine site personnel people and one foreign expert had been killed and severely wounded in Iraq's November attacks. In addition, Iranian officials stated, the Iraqi raids had inflicted serious damage on the Bushehr-1 plant. Iran portrayed the November 1987 strikes as an escalation of the scope of the Iran–Iraq conflict. (*Yearbook of the United Nations 1987*, 1992: 229–230)

to invest more of their diplomatic resources in arms control issues that had been overshadowed by Iran's war-time preoccupation with its Arab neighbour. In the early 1990s and already before that, the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations had also begun to take into account the lessons of the war against Iraq. Yet another important factor explaining the Islamic Republic's added focus on nuclear arms control following the two Gulf conflicts was that Iran had to take increasing pains to convince other governments that its nuclear power program, which Iranian leaders declared to be fully committed to, was intended only for peaceful purposes.

After the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war had taken effect in August 1988, then, Iranian officials had continued to underscore their country's categorical opposition to nuclear weapons and to military thinking that relied on the possession of such armaments.[82] Pointing to the threat posed by intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons to the security of individual states and to the very survival of mankind, the Islamic Republic continued to declare the mere existence of nuclear weapons as spiritually and morally unacceptable and designated their elimination as the most important issue on the international arms control agenda. According to Iranian authorities, their country's strong interest in nuclear disarmament stemmed from religious and humanitiarian considerations as well as from the fact that Iran had been the latest victim of WMD use. (CD/PV.479, 1988: 35; A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 14 and GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 23)

In the view of the Islamic Republic, the improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the subsequent end of the Cold War had offered unique opportunities for nuclear disarmament. At the end of the 1980s, the Iranians had restated their satisfaction with the December 1987 U.S.–Soviet treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces and pointed to the superpowers' September 1987 agreement to open nuclear risk reduction centers in their capitals as another cause for optimism in the area of nuclear arms control (CD/PV.514, 1989: 4).[83] The Islamic Republic had also greeted the completion of the U.S.–Soviet negotiations on the reduction and limitation of

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[82] Iranian officials regarded the major nuclear powers' military doctrines – and the idea of nuclear deterrence, in particular – as factors that fuelled the nuclear arms race and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the Iranian analysis, the belief in the indispensability of nuclear weapons coloured the major power relations and also encouraged regional powers to try to acquire security through nuclear superiority. As the doctrine of nuclear deterrence based on the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, the Iranians stated, it fought against international law and was morally reprehensible. (A/45/PV.5, 1990: 48; NPT/CONF.IV/SR.8, 1990: 149–150 and Zarif et al. 1996: 11)

strategic offensive arms which gave birth, after years of talks, to the first and the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I and START II) in 1991 and 1993, respectively (A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 22).[84] Furthermore, the Islamic Republic had welcomed the decisions taken by the post-Soviet countries of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine – which, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, had effectively become nuclear-weapon states – to give up their nuclear arsenals and to accede to the NPT as NNWS (CD/PV.691, 1994: 2).[85]

From the Iranian perspective, however, these nuclear arms control achievements had signified only a modest step towards the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Thus, in addition to Iran's optimistic overtures, the Islamic Republic's post-Cold War argumentation on nuclear arms control repeatedly stressed how great a problem nuclear weapons continued to be.[86] More often than not, Iran's warnings translated into strong diplomatic expressions of disappointment at the state of international nuclear arms control. In the Iranian opinion, NWS still basically acted as if nothing had changed in the world after the end of the Cold War. Not only did the nuclear powers continue to ignore diplomatic calls for complete nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework, the Iranians complained, but their military doctrines seemed to remain oblivious to the changes in the international system as well. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 10; A/50/PV.124, 1996: 10 and CD/PV.625, 1992: 3)

The heavy reliance of major power military thinking on nuclear weapons, the officials of the Islamic Republic observed, was indicative of those powers' post-Cold War tendency to view nuclear armaments first and foremost as political weapons. The major powers regarded their nuclear arsenals as a guarantee for national prestige, influence, and power in what was being called the new world order. Such belief and the general mind-set of domination, the Iranian argument went, also explained why –

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[83] The purpose of the U.S.–Soviet agreement on nuclear risk reduction centers had been to reduce the threat of an accidental nuclear war by establishing special communications links between the two states. For more on this agreement, see Goldblat (1994: 205 –206).

[84] Under START I, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals to the maximum of 6,000 warheads per party, whereas START II had reduced superpower national holdings to 3,000–3,500 warheads. For the details of the START treaties, see ibid. (1994: 66–73).

[85] Belarus formally acceded to the NPT on 22 July 1993, Kazakhstan on 14 February 1994, and Ukraine on 5 December 1994.

[86] Note, for example, the following Iranian remark made at the CD in September 1993: "Of course, one cannot deny the fact that the world today is more secure and that the persistent high state of alert has, for the time being, come to a halt. [...] but this fortunate and natural consequence of East–West thaw should by no means mask the dangers and threats still posed by the stubborn existence of so much nuclear weaponry around the globe" (CD/PV.659, 1993: 3).

instead of actual disarmament – the nuclear powers' post-Cold War diplomacy had concentrated on non-proliferation, the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries.[87] (CD/PV.659, 1993: 4; GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 18 and CD/PV.690, 1994: 9)

Iran condemned the nuclear powers' military thinking as flawed and argued that, in the post-Cold War world, there were no excuses whatsoever left for states to justify their possession of nuclear armaments. First, and without putting forward an alternate explanation, Iranian authorities rejected the claim that nuclear weapons and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence had prevented a war between the great powers during the Cold War (Zarif et al. 1996: 11). Secondly, the Iranians pointed out that nuclear weapons were not capable of providing solutions to the security problems of the post-Cold War era, including "excessive nationalism, ethnic rivalry and regional conflicts" (CD/PV.659, 1993: 4). Neither, in the Iranian view, could the possession of nuclear armaments be transformed into a foreign policy asset nor regarded as a deterrent against conventional weapons or chemical and biological armaments (A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 53–55).

As there was no rational and certainly no moral case to be made to defend the possession of nuclear weapons, Iranian officials summarized, the world needed a new security order in which nuclear arms would play no role.[88] Accordingly, the Islamic Republic actively called on NWS to abandon the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and to commit themselves to complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As an alternative to the notions of deterrence and balance of power, Iran introduced, in September 1994, the concept of a "defensive security scheme" which envisaged an international order where states' armed forces would only serve defensive purposes and be free from nuclear armaments and other WMD. (A/47/PV.5, 1992: 49; A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39 and CD/PV.690, 1994: 10)

In the Islamic Republic's view, complete nuclear disarmament should become a legal obligation arising from a "comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory"

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[87] The Islamic Republic objected to the central role given to non-proliferation in international arms control diplomacy because, in its opinion, non-proliferation was an approach that "breeds tension from within, aggravates imbalances and raises hostility" (CD/PV.690, 1994: 10).

[88] According to the Islamic Republic, NWS had the responsibility to explain to the world why they were not willing to give up their nuclear arsenals – in other words, what purpose their nuclear weaponry were serving (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 1).

international convention.[89] Iranian representatives called on governments to set a target date by which the treaty banning and eliminating nuclear weapons should be finished. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, the Iranians put forth, provided an excellent opportunity for states to agree on the target date as well as to set the negotiating process towards the final treaty in motion. As a first step, Iran focused on persuading governments to make the fundamental decision and pronounce their intention to rid the world of nuclear armaments within a fixed time period.[90] Irrespective of whether states were prepared to take such a step, the officials of the Islamic Republic declared, Iran would "not rest until our planet is free from the scourge of nuclear weapons." (A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 22; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 1–2 and A/50/PV.124, 1996: 12)

5.2.1.2 The issue of security assurances

Given the Islamic Republic's pessimistic assessment of nuclear powers' readiness – in the foreseeable future, at least – to destroy their nuclear arsenals and fundamentally revise their military doctrines, the Iranians had no illusions about the hurdles the proponents of complete nuclear disarmament were faced with. Therefore, while not prepared to make any compromises over its disarmament objective, Iran called for the implementation of interim international measures that would address the concerns of non-nuclear states and prepare the way for complete nuclear disarmament.[91] Security assurances were among the measures raised by the Iranians in this context. As before, the Islamic Republic was of the opinion that NNWS were fully entitled to security assurances from NWS in return for their acceptance of the NPT and their non-nuclear status. Not only would such assurances strengthen the security of NNWS, Iranian officials argued, but they would also reduce the possibility of non-nuclear states seeking to acquire a nuclear weapon capability of their own. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 5; CD/PV.691, 1994: 2–3 and CD/PV.514, 1989: 6–7)

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[89] Alluding to START, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties' acronym, Iranian officials called for the completion of a "STOP" (Strategic and Nuclear Arms Out of Our Planet) treaty (CD/PV.659, 1993: 3 and Nasseri 1995b: 241).

[90] Iranian representatives referred to the year 2000 as the preferred target date for comprehensive nuclear disarmament (CD/PV.625, 1992: 4).

[91] It should be noted that Iranian officials considered such interim measures ultimately pointless unless they were universally acknowledged as temporary solutions and explicitly linked to the goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Take, for example, the following Iranian comment from February 1994: "Nuclear

Iran stressed the importance of both positive and negative security assurances. As for the former, the Islamic Republic welcomed the UN Security Council's resolution 984 of April 1995 in which each of the five NWS and permanent members of the council – that is, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China – promised to act immediately in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter should any non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT become a victim of nuclear weapons use or the threat of use of those armaments. As for the measures available to the Security Council to assist the NNWS threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons, the resolution spoke of the investigation of such cases as well as of efforts to settle disputes and to restore international peace and security. Also, it referred to the provision of technical, medical, scientific, or humanitarian assistance to the victim state and to the Security Council's power to recommend appropriate procedures regarding compensation under international law for the losses, damages or injuries sustained as a result of nuclear aggression. (CD/PV.691, 1994: 3 and S/RES/984, 1995: 2)

Even though Iranian authorities characterized the resolution and the nuclear powers' PSA therein as a "step in the right direction," they did not hide their fundamental dissatisfaction with the document. The Islamic Republic regretted that the resolution did not include a legal assurance on the part of the Security Council that it would automatically respond to the use or threat of use of nuclear armaments. Also, in the Iranian opinion, the nuclear powers should have explicitly stated that any aggression involving the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would constitute a threat to international peace and security, and as a result, obligate NWS not only to provide humanitarian, technical, scientific, or medical help to the victim countries, but also to "use all necessary means in defence of the victims in accordance with the UN Charter." (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 100–101 and Kharrazi 1995)

At the end of the day, however, the Islamic Republic viewed PSA as secondary in importance to NSA.[92] Echoing the post-Cold War international opinion which increasingly questioned the legitimacy of nuclear arms and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, Iranian officials disapproved the fact that while NWS asked non-nuclear states to permanently forswear nuclear weapons by agreeing to the indefinite extension

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disarmament is the cardinal objective. Everything else finds meaning only under its shadow" (CD/PV.671, 1994: 18).

[92] Note, for example, the remark made by the Islamic Republic's UN representative in 1995 that in the diplomatic deliberations on security assurances, NSA constituted the "core of the problem" (Kharrazi 1995).

of the NPT, NWS themselves were not ready to pledge not to use nuclear arms against NNWS. As a result, Iran, together with a host of other NAM countries, such as Egypt and Nigeria, linked its position on the extension of the NPT to results achieved in the matter of NSA. (CD/PV.683, 1994: 18; A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 14 and Bunn and Timerbaev 1993: 13)

The Islamic Republic's NSA diplomacy centered on the demand that NWS should yield to an international legally binding instrument in which they would promise not to threaten or attack NNWS with nuclear armaments. As model arrangements, Iranian officials pointed to the treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga which had established NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and the South Pacific, respectively.[93] In the Additional Protocol II of the Tlatelolco Treaty, the five NWS had given NSA to the contracting parties. In Protocol II of the Rarotonga Treaty, NWS had committed themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear explosive devices against any party to the treaty or against each other's territories located within the zone. As far as the form of the international NSA instrument Iran was calling for was concerned, the representatives of the Islamic Republic alluded to the conclusion of a protocol that would be attached to the NPT. The Iranians also brought up the option of a separate multilateral convention for the purpose. (Du Preez 2003; Kharrazi 1995 and A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23)

Because of their insistence on an unambiguous legally binding NSA instrument and their principled opposition to unilateral NSA statements, Iranian authorities did not content themselves with the NSA declarations made by NWS in 1995 which were formally acknowledged by the UN Security Council resolution 984. The Islamic Republic was disappointed with the fact that the 1995 declarations were only politically binding and that, with the exception of those of China, the NSA given by the nuclear powers continued to be conditional.[94] The United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France qualified the assurances they gave to NNWS by excluding cases of invasion or any other attack on their respective countries, territories, armed forces or other troops, or against their allies or a state towards which they had security commitments,

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[93] As one Iranian official noted in April 1994: "When the extension of the NPT is discussed, it is imperative that nuclear-weapon states extend the obligation they undertook in the Tlatelolco and Rarotonga treaties to all states parties to the NPT" (A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23).

[94] In its 1995 declaration, China gave an unconditional assurance not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones at any time or under any circumstances. China's pledge concerned the non-nuclear parties to the NPT and those non-nuclear states

carried out or sustained by a NNWS in alliance or association with a NWS. Moreover, the United States and the United Kingdom made an additional qualification by stating that they would not apply their assurances in cases where the beneficiary was in material breach of its non-proliferation obligations under the NPT. (CD/PV.683, 1994: 18 and Du Preez 2003)

The Islamic Republic's interest in NSA and its general opposition to nuclear weapons further translated into active Iranian diplomacy in the process that led the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to declare, in July 1996, that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict. The advisory opinion rendered by the court – which also held that there existed an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control – was a response to two requests made for such an opinion, one by the WHO and the other by the UN General Assembly.[95] (Ware 1996)

Iran strongly supported the requests made by the WHO and the General Assembly and ultimately provided the ICJ with two written statements on the cases. The Iranians also participated in a related oral hearing before the court.[96] During the process surrounding the advisory opinion issue, Iran and other NNWS criticized the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France for having initially tried to prevent the WHO and the General Assembly from taking the case to the ICJ, and later, for having pressured the court not to give an answer in the matter. That these diplomatic efforts by the nuclear powers had failed and the advisory opinion of the ICJ eventually corresponded to Iran's stance paved the way for future Iranian demands for NSA, and more broadly, for complete nuclear disarmament. (A/C.1/49/PV.24, 1994: 9; Zarif et al. 1996: 1–2 and Ware 1996)

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that had entered into any comparable internationally recognized commitment not to manufacture or acquire nuclear explosive devices. (Du Preez 2003)

[95] In May 1993, the WHO had asked the ICJ to give an advisory opinion on whether, in view of the health and environmental effects, the use of nuclear weapons by a state in a war or other armed conflict would constitute a breach of its obligations under international law. The UN General Assembly, on the other hand, had, in its resolution of 15 December 1994, requested the court to render its advisory opinion on whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons was permitted under any circumstances. (Zarif et al. 1996: 1–2)

[96] For the details of Iran's legal argumentation in this connection, see ibid. (1996: 8–15).

5.2.1.3 Iran and the control of fissile materials

The Islamic Republic's nuclear diplomacy included the demand that nuclear-weapon states should be transparent and provide information about their nuclear arsenals in order to facilitate the much-needed transition towards a nuclear-free world. In Iran's assessment, the publication of data on the world's nuclear weapons stockpiles would advance the cause of nuclear disarmament by generating confidence among states and by reassuring non-nuclear states of the nuclear powers' military intentions. With these considerations in mind, the authorities of the Islamic Republic supported the diplomatic stance which insisted on the inclusion of nuclear weapons and other WMD in the UN Register of Conventional Arms created in 1991. Because of the nuclear powers' rejection of such a position, the government of Argentina launched – in 1993, as a compromise solution – the idea of a separate nuclear weapons register. Had Argentina's ultimately unsuccessful proposal led to concrete steps in the matter, the Iranians, who strongly criticized the nuclear powers for their opposition to the expansion of the UN register's scope, would have most likely supported the establishment of a separate arms register. (CD/PV.659, 1993: 7–8 and Wulf 2000: 91–92)

For the most part, Iran's calls for an expanded UN weapons register did not make specific references to nuclear bombs – as well as to the necessary delivery systems – but alluded generally to WMD in all their aspects. Accordingly, Iran's definition of WMD covered the fissile materials needed for the production of nuclear armaments.[97] In the Iranian view, the world had the right to receive information about the fissile materials available to nuclear-weapon states. But although the Islamic Republic coupled the issue of fissile materials with its diplomatic effort to promote the expansion of the UN arms register's scope, the nuclear powers' rejection of such efforts, combined with the fact that international deliberations on fissile materials were progressing on a distinct diplomatic track, led the Iranians to pursue the question of fissile materials outside the actual transparency in armaments debate.

Efforts to control fissile materials date back to the aftermath of World War II and have always been tightly linked with the broader objectives of nuclear non-proliferation

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[97] One estimate concludes that some 3,000 tonnes (metric tons) of fissile material have been produced since 1945. Of this quantity, one-third comprises the fissile material produced for, used in, and discharged from civil reactors and nuclear fuel-cycle facilities, whereas the remaining two-thirds involves the material produced for, used in, and extracted from nuclear warheads. (Walker 1999: 30)

and disarmament.[98] On the one hand, the control of fissile materials has been viewed as a means to inhibit the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals and to ensure that states do not act against their arms control commitments by secretly storing or assembling nuclear weapons. On the other hand, fissile material control has been regarded as a supplementary way of preventing the spread of nuclear armaments to additional countries and also as a crucial measure in the prevention of nuclear terrorism. (O'Neill 1999: 41 and Shea 2003: 39)

However, it was not until the early 1990s that international control efforts singularly focusing on fissile materials started to make real advances. The door for progress was opened by the decisions made, by 1992, by the United States and Russia to halt the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons purposes. As a consequence, on 16 December 1993, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution that called for the establishment of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. (Johnson 1998: 106 and Shea 2003: 39)

The December 1993 resolution was a consensus text which did not reveal the disagreements that existed among states over the planned treaty's appropriate scope and over the content of fissile material control at large. During the diplomatic consultations of 1994 and early 1995 on the mandate of the fissile material ban negotiations, however, the differences of opinion became increasingly evident. Basically, there were two camps in the talks. The great majority of states belonged to the group which was of the view that the mandate should be for negotiating a ban that would cover not only the production of plutonium and HEU, but also the stockpiling of those materials. For this group of states, then, the conclusion of a comprehensive Fissile Material Treaty (FMT) was the ultimate objective. (Johnson 1998: 106 and Shea 2003: 51)

Due to practical reasons, however, most of the countries belonging to the FMT camp were prepared to acquiesce in an international instrument that would only ban the future production of plutonium and HEU for weapons purposes and leave the issue of stocks – that is, past production of fissile materials – to be dealt with at a later stage. The rationale behind the decision to settle for a mere Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) was that NWS and India – counted among the undeclared or so-called threshold nuclear states – were prepared to block any diplomatic initiative that would go

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[98] For a chronology of international fissile material control efforts, see Barbour (1999: 97–104).

beyond the ban on future production. Therefore, it was better to have a start, even a modest one, than to bring the whole process to a halt. That a FMCT would potentially cap the production of plutonium and HEU for military purposes in the five NWS and subject the fissile material production of the threshold states of India, Pakistan, and Israel under some sort of control was seen as a welcome prospect in itself.[99] (Johnson 1995b; Johnson 1998: 106–107 and Shea 2003: 51)

All members of the FMT camp were not ready for such a diplomatic concession. Some of them – among others, Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, and also Iran – pushed hard for a broad interpretation of the scope of the planned fissile treaty.[100] The Islamic Republic's insistence on the inclusion of fissile material stocks into the treaty negotiations emanated from two main considerations. In the first place, as the Iranians coupled the control of fissile materials with the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, from the Islamic Republic's standpoint a comprehensive FMT that would obligate NWS to reduce and dispose of their military fissile material stocks would serve the disarmament objective.[101] Secondly, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic focus on fissile material stockpiles stemmed from the major Iranian interest in international measures that would interfere with and impede the nuclear weapons programs of India, Pakistan, and Israel – all located in Iran's neighbourhood and strongly present in Iranian threat analyses. (Johnson 1995b; A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 14–15 and CD/PV.683, 1994: 20)

Although pressing for controls on the fissile material stocks of the three threshold states as well as on those of the five NWS, the officials of the Islamic Republic had no illusions about the difficulty of the task. As far as India, Pakistan, and Israel were concerned, Iran's principal goal was to see these countries join the NPT and subject

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[99] Because the non-nuclear parties to the NPT have committed themselves, by accepting article II of the treaty, not to build nuclear weapons – in other words, not to use fissile material for weapon purposes –, a FMCT would, from a legal point of view, only concern the military production of fissile materials by the five NWS and the nuclear-weapon states not parties to the NPT.

[100] Note, for example, the following Iranian statement, made in June 1994, on the mandate of the fissile material ban negotiations: "This mandate must include an explicit reference to the current stockpiles dispersed in different parts of the world. One cannot envisage an eventual agreement on prohibition of fissile materials which leave huge amounts of the existing unsafeguarded materials untouched" (CD/PV.683, 1994: 20–21). For other Iranian calls for the inclusion of stockpiles in the international fissile material control instrument, see the Islamic Republic's relevant statements at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference (NPT/CONF.1995/SR.8, 1995: 100 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.1/WP.5, 1995: 294, 296). Prior to the 1995 NPT conference, Iran stated that it would support the "limited renewal" of the NPT only if "careful attention" was paid at the conference to the views calling for a permanent ban on the production, development, and stockpiling of, as well as on the trade in, all fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes (A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39).

[101] The reduction and disposal of fissile materials produced in the past would concern stocks that have arisen as a result of nuclear armament processes, nuclear weapon dismantlements, and the removal of redundant materials from military production cycles (Walker and Berkhout 1999: 5).

their nuclear activities to IAEA full-scope safeguards. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic argued that should an international fissile material ban reduce the possibility of the threshold countries joining the NPT, the instrument might not be worth the trouble. Iran voiced an alternative to a separate fissile material treaty by stating that a prohibition against the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, imposed on all parties to the NPT, could be incorporated into the NPT as a treaty amendment. Such an approach, Iranian officials pointed out, would also serve to redress the "prevailing substantial imbalance in the NPT" as far as the responsibilities of NWS and NNWS were concerned. (A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 22 and CD/PV.683, 1994: 20)

Essentially, then, the Islamic Republic's fissile diplomacy based on a two-pronged approach. Both the possibility of an independent fissile ban treaty – that would regulate stockpiles and future production alike – and the option of a NPT-related arrangement were put forth by the Iranians.[102] But even though the representatives of the Islamic Republic did not publicly admit it, in practice, neither one of the Iranian-promoted schemes was realistically achievable. The only option that had the chance of succeeding was the conclusion of a FMCT. And serious discussions even on a FMCT would not have been possible had the major nuclear powers not concluded that, in the post-Cold War world, they possessed enough plutonium and HEU to refrain from further military production of those materials (Johnson 1998: 106).

Still, from the same powers' point of view, there were good reasons to say no to diplomatic proposals going beyond the FMCT. Fundamentally, NWS – which mainly viewed the fissile treaty as a non-proliferation instrument and as a means to cap the military production of plutonium and HEU in the non-NPT threshold states – wanted to keep their fissile material stocks out of the reach of the outside world in order to safeguard information about their nuclear weapons arsenals and designs.[103] Similarly, India, Pakistan, and Israel were highly careful not to take part in international arms control arrangements that would compromise their ambiguous postures on nuclear weapons or narrow their strategic options. (Johnson 1998: 106 and Walker and Berkhout 1999: 15)

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[102] Still, Iran did state that the negotiating mandate of an international fissile ban instrument should "leave the option open for the eventual outcome of negotiations to become part of, or be attached to, the NPT rather than constitute a separate treaty" (CD/PV.683, 1994: 21).

[103] The fissile material stocks serving current or future military needs are held, among others, in operational weapons (Walker and Berkhout 1999: 5).

The gulf between the FMCT camp and the FMT hardliners continued to exist despite the fact that, in March 1995, the CD, which had been designated as the most appropriate forum to negotiate the international treaty on fissile materials, managed to agree on the negotiating mandate. The content of this so-called "Shannon mandate" – named after the Canadian diplomat who had prepared the CD's March 1995 report that contained the negotiating mandate – was basically identical with the language of the UN General Assembly's December 1993 resolution. The only major difference between the UN resolution and the Shannon report was that the latter included an understanding according to which all issues pertaining to the planned treaty's scope could be addressed in the context of treaty negotiations. This formulation reflected the position of Iran and other staunch FMT supporters, and it enabled them to keep the issue of stocks on the table during subsequent fissile ban discussions. Yet, as the FMCT camp remained strongly opposed to the broad interpretation of the negotiating mandate, the discussions taking place after the adoption of the Shannon report quickly led to a diplomatic deadlock.[104] (Shea 2003: 51)

5.2.2 Iran and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty

5.2.2.1 The pre-negotiations period

International agreement on a CTB was another major objective of the Islamic Republic's post-war nuclear disarmament diplomacy. Like before, Iranian officials called for the establishment of a CTBT and viewed the treaty as a means to prevent both the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear armaments. Also, the Iranians argued that a CTB would put an end to the adverse health and environmental effects resulting from nuclear tests. And as the Islamic Republic continued to view the issue of CTB as

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[104] It should be noted that the Shannon report itself made a distinction between two state groupings in the CD: those who viewed the negotiating mandate as only permitting the consideration of future production of fissile materials and those who viewed the mandate as permitting the consideration of both future and past production. In addition, the report made mention of countries that specifically underlined the importance of the planned treaty's comprehensiveness. According to these states, the fissile ban treaty should not only focus on the production of fissile materials, but it should also cover other relevant issues such as the management of such materials. (CD/1299, 1995: 2). Iranian officials' statements on fissile materials concentrated almost entirely on the production dimension, even if the Iranians did touch upon other related issues as well. For example, the Islamic Republic expressed its concern over illicit trafficking of fissile materials. Yet, in the opinion of Iran, it was mainly the nuclear-weapon states' responsibility to manage and protect those materials from falling into the wrong hands. (GC/XXXVIII/COM.5/OR.2, 1994: 7 and GC/XXXVIII/COM.5/OR.6, 1994: 22)

an indicator of the willingness of NWS to fulfill their NPT-based obligation to move towards complete nuclear disarmament, Iranian representatives insisted that an agreement on a CTBT would significantly consolidate the NPT and enhance its credibility.[105] (CD/PV.659, 1993: 4; GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 26 and A/CN.10/PV.165, 1992: 50)

In the Iranian opinion, the time was ripe for a CTBT both in a technical and a political sense. Technically, the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained, there were no obstacles to a CTB, for underground nuclear tests could now be detected with a high degree of certainty. Pointing to the radical improvement in superpower relations and to the progress made in U.S.–Soviet arms control in the late 1980s, Iran argued that a CTBT would be also politically feasible. Although the Iranians welcomed the various nuclear test moratoria declared by some of the NWS in the late 1980s and early 1990s,[106] they regarded such measures as insufficient; a CTBT had to be negotiated as soon as possible. (CD/PV.479, 1988: 4; A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 34–35 and A/C.1/48/SR.13, 1993: 9)

On 5 August 1988, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the PTBT, five non-nuclear signatories of the treaty made a call for a specific amendment conference to be held to convert the PTBT into a CTBT (Loeb 1993: 842).[107] Iran lent its support to the initiative and later became one of the countries formally asking for an amendment conference to take place (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 57 and A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 10). Originally, the countries behind the amendment proposal had hoped that the conference would be convened prior to the 1990 NPT review conference, so that the results of the two events could be linked to each other. The supporters of a CTB tried to gain leverage in the amendment issue by implying that nuclear powers' opposition to the PTBT's amendment could jeopardize consensus at the subsequent NPT gathering. In the end, however, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom – the three depositary states of the PTBT – blocked the effort by scheduling the PTBT meeting for January 1991. (Spector and Smith 1990: 43)

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[105] The preamble of the NPT refers to the "determination expressed by the Parties to the 1963 Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water in its Preamble to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end."

[106] For these moratoria, see Loeb (1993: 827, 840–843).

[107] The call for a PTBT amendment conference was an effort to revive the diplomatic CTBT discussions which had come to a deadlock. The provisions of the PTBT allow any state party to propose an amendment to the treaty, and upon request from one-third or more of the states parties, a conference must be convened by the depositary governments to consider such a proposal. (Goldblat 1995: 363)

Nonetheless, it was the issue of CTB that prevented the 1990 NPT conference from agreeing on a final declaration or even on a formal reaffirmation of support for the NPT. The disagreements between NAM and a number of other non-nuclear countries that asked NWS to constrain and reduce their nuclear arsenals through an expeditious conclusion of a CTBT and the United States and its allies – who viewed the CTB only as a long-term objective – ultimately brought the NPT conference to an unsuccessful close.[108] Iran's conference delegation was actively involved in the test-ban debate and promoted the NAM position in the matter. The Islamic Republic was also among the conference participants that underscored the importance of the PTBT amendment conference scheduled for January 1991. (Epstein 1990: 45–47; Spector and Smith 1990: 39, 43–44 and A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 38–39)

In the end, the January 1991 PTBT conference turned out to be a disappointment for Iran and other non-nuclear states striving for the PTBT's transformation into a CTBT. Due to American and British opposition to the PTBT's modification, clearly expressed already prior to the conference's start, the amendment proposal presented at the gathering was never put to the vote (Goldblat 1995: 363).[109] Following the unsuccessful PTBT gathering, Iranian officials strongly criticized the two nuclear powers for their refusal to accept the non-nuclear states' amendment proposal and continued to advocate the treaty's modification. The Islamic Republic called for the adoption of a CTB prior to the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and asserted that world opinion demanded the creation of such a ban. (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 35; A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 56 and A/C.1/48/SR.13, 1993: 9)

In fact, the Iranians hardened their position by explicitly stating that their support for the NPT's extension was dependent on the progress made in the CTB question. In this respect, the Islamic Republic was following a diplomatic course that had been gaining currency among other NAM countries as well. Already at the 1990 NPT review conference, non-aligned countries, led by Mexico, had seriously discussed the possibility of making a direct linkage between the extension of the NPT – which

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[108] In the final hours of the 1990 NPT review conference, the disagreement over a CTB crystallized into diplomatic wrangling between the United States and Mexico, the most passionate advocate of a test ban at the conference (Epstein 1990: 45–47 and Spector and Smith 1990: 39, 43–44).

[109] The conference only managed to mandate its president to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress towards a CTB and to resuming the conference's work at an appropriate time. Under the treaty amendment put forth by the non-aligned countries in January 1991, the parties would have undertaken – in addition to their obligations under the PTBT – to prohibit, prevent, and not to carry out any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion underground or in any other environment. (Goldblat 1995: 363)

required a simple majority decision – and a CTB. (A/C.1/48/SR.13, 1993: 9 and Epstein 1990: 45, 47)

5.2.2.2 The first year of the negotiations

By 1994, as a result of increasing domestic and international pressure, NWS had ultimately recognized that the conclusion of a CTBT would be in their interest, too. In essence, NWS viewed the planned CTBT as an instrument that would help them to block the horizontal proliferation of nuclear armaments – a threat scenario which, in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, had become one of nuclear powers' key foreign policy concerns. Consequently, in January 1994, the CD adopted a mandate for the negotiations on a CTBT. The January 1994 mandate called on the CD's already existing Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban "to negotiate intensively a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable CTBT, which would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security." (Johnson 1997 and Johnson 1998: 88, 90, 100).

Iran welcomed the mandate's adoption and became closely involved in the CTBT talks. In 1994, during which the national delegations mainly concentrated on presenting their governments' views on an optimal test-ban instrument, Iranian officials elaborated on the basic components of their negotiation position. Nonetheless, the Islamic Republic started the CTBT talks by criticizing the nuclear powers for their allegedly presumptuous approach to the negotiations. In the Iranian view, NWS behaved as if they were entitled to set the terms of the negotiations without any regard to non-nuclear states' interests. Fundamentally, the officials of the Islamic Republic complained, the nuclear powers wanted to create a document that would prevent other countries from conducting nuclear tests and simultaneously subject their own nuclear activities only to minor restrictions. Iran expressed its objection to such a policy and insisted that the planned test ban should tackle horizontal proliferation and, above all, pave the ground for complete nuclear disarmament.[110] (CD/PV.671, 1994: 17–18)

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[110] As underscored by Iran's CTBT delegation: "We do not [...] agree to the notion that the threat is limited to the emerging nuclear-weapon states and to horizontal proliferation. Indeed, we non-nuclear-weapons states see this exercise as only a step towards nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament is the cardinal objective." Resultantly, Iran was one of the countries that hoped to see the CTBT's preamble include text provisions that stress the treaty's role as a measure against the vertical proliferation of

The scope of obligations

As far as the content of the CTBT was concerned, the Iranians, who wanted to see the treaty finished before the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference,[111] took actively part, first of all, in the debate on the test-ban's scope of obligations. All national negotiators recognized that the treaty should ban nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, under water, and underground, but beyond this basic notion, no general agreement existed between the delegations. Iranian representatives spoke of a treaty that would bring about a "general and complete cessation of tests by all states in all environments for all time." They explained their definition to cover not only explosive testing of nuclear weapons, but the so-called non-explosive tests carried out in laboratories as well. By bringing up the issue of laboratory experiments, which include such activities as computer simulation, the Islamic Republic's negotiators came close to the position of Indonesia's delegates who called for a ban on all nuclear testing, whether explosive or not. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 6, CD/PV.683, 1994: 21 and Johnson 1995c)

The difference between the Iranian and Indonesian approaches was that the Islamic Republic's scope definition left the question of the so-called peaceful nuclear explosions (PNE) open. At the outset of the CTBT negotiations, China had presented its strong demand that, under the treaty, states should be allowed to carry out nuclear explosions for civilian – such as construction or commercial – purposes. Iranian negotiators agreed with the view advocated by the opponents of the Chinese proposal that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish PNE from explosions conducted for military purposes. Still, the Iranians did not rule out the possibility of a treaty provision allowing PNE to take place. Explaining their hesitation in the issue, Iran's representatives underlined their rejection of the notion prevalent in the developed world that peaceful activities which can theoretically serve military ends must always be monitored, controlled, or banned. The negotiators of the Islamic Republic said that their

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nuclear weapons as well as the necessity of total elimination of those armaments within a time-bound framework. (CD/PV.671, 1994: 18 and Johnson 1997)

[111] For Iranian statements on the CTBT negotiations' preferred timetable, see CD/PV.683 (1994: 22) and CD/PV.690 (1994: 10–11). In these pronouncements, the Islamic Republic also restated the linkage it had made between the CTBT talks and its willingness to support what Iranian officials referred to as the "limited renewal" of the NPT in 1995. By coupling the two diplomatic processes with each other, the Islamic Republic hoped to gain political leverage in the CTBT negotiations. Moreover, the linkage made by the Iranians was indicative of the fear among NAM countries that, after having succeeded in securing

country had greatly suffered from such a conception. They also insisted that the future test-ban treaty should not contain any provisions that could be interpreted as restricting nuclear technology transfers for peaceful purposes. (Johnson 1995c; CD/PV.671, 1994: 20 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 7)

While refraining from adapting a clear stand on the PNE issue, Iran was against the American negotiation position that would have allowed NWS to carry out hydronuclear experiments (HNE) – that is, nuclear explosions of very low yield – to keep their nuclear weapons safe and reliable. Similarly, the Islamic Republic opposed the French and the British delegates' effort to reserve their countries the right to conduct, in exceptional circumstances, nuclear explosions without restriction on yield in order to ensure the safety of their nuclear arsenals. According to Iran, the safety exemptions put forth by the NWS were unacceptable because they could potentially be activated to mask weapon development activities. (Goldblat 1995: 364; Johnson 1995c and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 7)

During the CTBT talks, some delegations argued that the treaty should impose a ban both on the conduct of nuclear explosions and on preparations for such explosions. The Iranians' response to this initiative was somewhat lukewarm, for although they basically supported the idea, they implied that the formulation of such a provision might turn out to be too complex a task for the negotiators. Iran's delegates asked, for example, how such preparations would be defined and how one could be sure that states would not be baselessly accused of preparing themselves for a weapon test. (Goldblat 1995: 366; CD/PV.671, 1994: 20 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 7)

Yet on a related issue, the Islamic Republic joined the view of those delegations that called on nuclear powers to close down all the sites they had used for nuclear testing. In the Iranian opinion, the CTBT should oblige all the states parties to close down their nuclear sites as well as to destroy any equipment specifically designed for test purposes. Iranian officials maintained that such measures were needed to reduce the possibility that nuclear powers would resume nuclear testing. (CD/PV.683, 1994: 21; A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 14 and CD/PV.671, 1994: 20)

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the extension of the NPT in 1995, NWS might lose their interest in the CTBT (A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39 and Johnson 1998: 98).

Verification

The development of a system to detect and locate a possible nuclear test was naturally a central topic in the CTBT negotiations. The Islamic Republic's initial comments on verification outlined the basic characteristics of its position in the matter. Accordingly, Iran's negotiators called for a non-discriminatory, universal, technically effective, and internationally supervised verification system. More specifically, they expressed their government's view that verification activities under the CTBT should rely first and foremost on the application of seismic technologies and on-site inspections. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 8–9; CD/PV.671, 1994: 19 and CD/PV.683, 1994: 21)

The Islamic Republic did not rule out future incorporation of non-seismic technologies – such as atmospheric, infrasound, and hydroacoustic monitoring – and other mechanisms into the planned verification system. Nonetheless, Iranian negotiators argued that such complementary steps would have to meet certain criteria. Among others, the Iranians declared, they would have to produce information that clearly contributes to the verification system's efficiency, be cost-effective, and not in any way interfere with the states parties' peaceful nuclear transfers, with their industrial development, or with their peaceful nuclear research. In addition, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that any complementary elements of the CTBT verification system would have to be operated and kept under multilateral international control. (CD/PV.671, 1994: 19; CD/PV.683, 1994: 21–22 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 8–9)

The implementing organization

As for the planned international organization charged with the task of executing and verifying the CTBT, the national delegations had two main proposals on the table. The first one entrusted the implementation task to the IAEA, whereas the majority of the delegations held that a separate CTBT organization (CTBTO) was needed. Iran's pronouncements on the matter did not lean towards either proposal but discussed both options. If the IAEA was to be entrusted with the CTBT's execution, Iranian negotiators stated, the technical capabilities of the agency would have to be strengthened and the IAEA's decision-making structures would have to be revised. The Islamic Republic

wanted to increase the diplomatic influence of the non-nuclear parties to the NPT and the future CTBT vis-à-vis the countries that would stay outside those instruments. (Johnson 1995c; CD/PV.671, 1994: 20 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 9)

If, on the other hand, a specific CTBTO was to be founded, the Iranians continued, the member states would have to ensure that the agency would remain cost-effective and not have a large and complex bureaucracy. Also, the Islamic Republic found it crucial that the CTBTO would have the capability to analyze and disseminate the verification data transmitted to it. Moreover, supporting a proposal put forth by Japan, the Iranians argued that the CTBTO would need only one major decision-making organ, that is, the Conference of the States Parties that would comprise all the states parties, each with one vote. The rationale for the Japanese proposal was to allow the CTBT negotiators to avoid politically sensitive discussions on the composition of the Executive Council, the CTBTO's planned executive body. (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 9; CD/PV.683, 1994: 22 and Johnson 1995c)

Entry into force and withdrawal

In regards to the test-ban treaty's entry into force (EIF), the Islamic Republic was of the opinion that the CTBT should enter into force only after all NWS and threshold nuclear states had joined it. At the same time, however, the Iranians acknowledged that the CTBT's EIF should not remain hostage to a few countries' refusal to become parties to it. Therefore, Iranian negotiators emphasized, the states that were hesitating to join the CTBT should be offered concrete incentives for treaty accession, for example, in the area of peaceful nuclear cooperation. Correspondingly, those who would remain outside the treaty should be subjected to international "punitive measures." (CD/PV.683, 1994: 22 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 9)

On the issue of treaty withdrawal, Iran took an unequivocal stand: the withdrawal of "nuclear-weapon states and other nuclear advanced countries" from the CTBT should not be allowed because, otherwise, the treaty's meaning would be nullified. Beside making this fundamental point, Iranian representatives added that the final text of the CTBT should include clear provisions on how to deal with countries that would decide to back out of the treaty. Once again, the Islamic Republic envisioned the use of unspecified punitive measures as the preferred solution. Iranian negotiators wanted to

see clear treaty provisions in this regard, so that countries would be treated according to uniform criteria and rules. As an example of how states had been treated unevenly in the past, the Iranians drew a comparison between the cases of Israel and North Korea. Whereas Israel, despite its reluctance to join the NPT and to end its nuclear weapons program, had been left alone and even assisted in the nuclear field by the major powers, Iranian negotiators reprehended, North Korea's March 1993 decision to withdraw from the NPT had caused a major international uproar and led to enormous diplomatic pressure against that country.[112] (CD/PV.683, 1994: 22)

5.2.2.3 The second and the third year of the negotiations

Following the first round of the CTBT negotiations, in September 1994, the CD's nuclear test ban committee adopted a report which included a 95-page draft of the planned treaty. At this stage, however, the draft or the so-called rolling text was only a summary of the various positions put forth by the national delegations and, therefore, far from a uniform whole. As a result, in 1995, much of the CTBT negotiators' attention focused on identifying and sorting out the differences of view on various treaty issues. (Johnson 1995c)

The delegates of the Islamic Republic naturally participated in the 'clean-up' work, but having explicated their government's negotiation positions already in the course of 1994, their statements of 1995 did not offer much new in terms of substance. Still, in 1995, Iranian officials were not only closely involved in the CTBT deliberations, but they also strongly called for the adoption of a CTB in the course of the April–May NPT Review and Extension Conference. At the conference, Iran belonged to the group of 14 non-aligned countries that objected to the indefinite extension of the NPT and wanted the treaty to be extended for rolling fixed periods of 25 years, each extension being dependent on the achievement of certain treaty-related objectives. The conclusion of a CTBT was one of such objectives referred to by the group. While, in the end, Iran and the like-minded non-aligned states were not able to push through their formula for a limited extension of the NPT, they nevertheless managed to obtain, in return for their support for a consensus that made the treaty permanent, a politically binding

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[112] North Korea suspended the effectuation of its March 1993 decision – originally a response to the diplomatic arm wrestling between North Korea and the IAEA over international nuclear inspections in that country – in June 1993 after negotiations with the United States. In return, the Americans pledged not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against North Korea. (Mansourov 1995: 27)

commitment from NWS that the CTBT would be finished no later than in 1996. (Epstein 1995 and Welsh 1995)

In June 1995, in the middle of the CTBT talks, Jacques Chirac, the newly elected president of France, announced that his country would conduct a final series of underground nuclear tests by May 1996, after which the French government would be ready to sign the CTBT. France's announcement to end its nuclear test moratorium, which had been in force since 1992, sparked strong protests from all over the world, including Tehran. The authorities of the Islamic Republic characterized the decision as a blow to international nuclear disarmament efforts and to the outcome of the NPT's Review and Extension Conference. (Rauf 1995: 49 and CD/PV.708, 1995: 24)

In the Iranian view, the French decision indicated, for its part, that having secured the indefinite extension of the NPT, NWS felt free again to follow their own nuclear agendas. In essence, the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed, the French announcement was indicative of the nuclear powers' firm determination to maintain and strengthen their nuclear arsenals. Taking into account the fact that China had conducted a nuclear test in May 1995, Iran condemned what it alluded to as the "nuclear test race" and insisted that pending the conclusion of the CTBT, nuclear powers should refrain from further testing. (CD/PV.708, 1995: 24; GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 19 and A/50/PV.5, 1995: 31)

In September 1995, the CD's test-ban committee produced its second report on the CTBT negotiations which contained a 97-page draft treaty. The rolling text of 1995 remained heavily bracketed, indicating that at the beginning of the third and final round of the CTBT talks, there were still substantial disagreements between the national delegations over the treaty's content. Iran pursued its active CTBT diplomacy during the negotiations' final year, and on 22 February 1996, in order to "encourage all interlocutors to consider possibilities for reasonable agreements both on the broader conceptual differences as well as the details and the wordings," the Islamic Republic presented a draft or model CTBT of its own to the CD. (Johnson 1995c and CD/PV.726, 1996: 8)

Although most countries welcomed the Iranian model treaty as an initiative that sought to facilitate the negotiations, there were voices among the delegations that viewed the proposal as nothing more than an effort to promote Iran's national positions (Johnson 1997). Whatever the Iranian model treaty's ultimate rationale, the draft text and the Islamic Republic's subsequent statements testified to a clear division made by

the Iranians between treaty issues that were of secondary importance, and thus negotiable, and questions regarding which there was no room for compromise.

The scope of obligations

Regarding the CTBT's scope of obligations, the Islamic Republic continued to point out that the treaty should ban nuclear tests at any place and of any yield.[113] In the Iranian view, the widely accepted wording put forward by Australia in March 1995, which prohibited "any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion," was unacceptable because it left the door open for qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Given that the Australian formulation covered only explosions, Iranian officials maintained, nuclear powers would still be able to conduct test simulations – whether through computer-assisted analyses or through so-called subcritical tests, that is, nuclear experiments that stop short of triggering a self-sustaining chain reaction (Tulliu and Schmalberger 2001: 119) – and thereby improve their weapon arsenals.[114]

During 1996, Iran's earlier hesitation with the issue of PNE transformed into qualified acceptance of such explosions. Yet, the Iranian negotiators pointed out that PNE could be carried out only if certain requirements were met. First, the Iranians emphasized, it would have to be undisputably proven that nuclear explosions make a contribution to peaceful scientific research and other civilian activities. So far, Iranian officials added, no country had been able to provide evidence of PNE's civilian benefits. And even if the situation changed in the future, Iran's argument went, states would be allowed to carry out a peaceful explosion only with the blessing of the CTBTO's Conference of the States Parties – a 4/5 majority decision would be needed – and under strict international monitoring. The Conference of the States Parties would also be responsible for the details pertaining to the monitoring and verification of a PNE.[115] (CD/PV.726, 1996: 6 and CD/1384, 1996: 7)

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[113] The relevant formulation in the Islamic Republic's model treaty read as follows: "Each State Party undertakes to prohibit, to prevent, and not to carry out, any nuclear weapon test or any other nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control" (CD/1384, 1996: 4).

[114] As one Iranian official noted in September 1996: "[...] competition has already started in the accumulation and utilization of technology and data collected from nuclear explosions to conduct advanced simulation testing" (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 10).

[115] By 1996, it had become clear that the CTBT would be implemented by a separate international organization established for the purpose. The Conference of the States Parties was defined as the CTBTO's main organ. It was entrusted with the responsibility to oversee the implementation of, and review compliance with the CTBT, and to oversee the activities of the two other organs of the CTBTO: the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat. As the Conference of the States Parties would

As far as nuclear test sites were concerned, the Islamic Republic's position remained unchanged. In the Iranian view, states should be obliged, under the CTBT, to close such sites and to destroy all equipment designed for test purposes. As called for in the Iranian model treaty, the states parties would have the responsibility to inform the CTBTO, not later than six months after the CTBT's EIF, of the measures they had taken in this respect. Furthermore, in order to promote transparency and confidence among the states parties, the Islamic Republic's negotiators argued, governments should submit declarations to the CTBTO in which they would provide detailed information about their past nuclear tests. For the same reason, the Iranians continued, the states parties should also be obliged to provide the CTBTO with notification of "any explosion using 300 tonnes or greater of TNT-equivalent blasting material detonated as a single explosion anywhere on its territory, or at any place under its jurisdiction or control." (CD/PV.726, 1996: 7; CD/PV.745, 1996: 13 and CD/1384, 1996: 62)

Verification

In the debate on CTBT verification, the Islamic Republic lent its support to a verification system based on the so-called International Monitoring System (IMS). In Iran's view, the IMS – which was ultimately agreed by the delegations to include a global, two-tier seismic system, supported by hydroacoustic, radionuclide, and infrasound networks[116] – provided a sufficient basis to ensure that compliance under the CTBT could be verified in an efficient and reliable manner. However, the Iranians added, additional technologies could be examined and potentially included in the IMS in the future to improve the verification system. (Johnson 1997; CD/PV.726, 1996: 6 and CD/1384, 1996: 16)

By the time of the start of the CTBT negotiations' final round in January 1996, the question of what kind of a role intelligence information – or, in CTBT parlance, information derived from national technical means (NTM) – should play in the planned verification system had become a major cause of dispute at the CD. Many countries –

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normally convene only once a year, the Executive Council would effectively act as the CTBTO's principal decision-making body.

[116] More specifically, the IMS was agreed to include 50 primary seismic stations, 120 auxiliary seismic stations, 80 radionuclide stations for measuring radioactive particles in the atmosphere, 11 hydroacoustic stations and, finally, 60 infrasound stations. As indicated by Annex 1 of the CTBT, Iran agreed to take the responsibility for one primary seismological station (located in Tehran), two auxiliary seismological

Russia and the United States, among others – held that by accepting intelligence data as a source of information, the states parties would significantly increase the verification system's credibility and its deterrence effect. On the other hand, China, together with several non-aligned countries, was worried that NTM data would be available only to a few states and could be used to serve questionable political purposes. (Johnson 1997)

Iran was among the countries that had major reservations about NMT information. In principle, it objected to the utilization of such data in CTBT-related verification. Indirectly pointing to the use of "partial" and "discriminatory" intelligence by "certain states" against the Islamic Republic in the past, Iranian officials argued that the CTBT should not offer a pretext under which states could implement malicious national policies. As it became clear that NTM data would play a role in the final document, however, the Islamic Republic softened its position and sought to leave a mark in the treaty text. The Iranians signalled their readiness to accept the utilization, "under international scrunity," of information derived from NTM, but they added that the value of such data had to be viewed as secondary to that received from the IMS. Otherwise, Iran's negotiators emphasized, individual states would be able to register claims of treaty violations solely based on their own, "private and non-transparent sources."[117] (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 10–11; CD/PV.740, 1996: 26 and CD/PV.745, 1996: 12)

Underscoring the primacy of IMS data in verification, the Islamic Republic argued that no other type of information should be allowed to be used to back up a request made by a state party for an OSI in an area where a nuclear explosion was suspected to have taken place.[118] The Iranians noted that the data transmitted by the IMS to the International Data Centre (IDC), which would form an integral part of the CTBTO, should be processed, analyzed, and reported on by the centre. In addition, each state party ought to have access not only to all information made available to the IDC, but also to all other data obtained by the CTBTO by means of the verification measures

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stations (Kirman and Masjid-i Sulayman, respectively), one radionuclide station (Tehran), and one infrasound station (Tehran).

[117] The Islamic Republic also expressed its view according to which NTM data, as referred to in the CTBT, could not in any way be interpreted as including information received from espionage and human intelligence – activities that were against the "generally recognized principles of international law" (CD/PV.745, 1996: 12). During the CTBT talks, the national delegations gave differing definitions to NTM. Some delegations viewed it as only covering technology – such as satellites – that might not be directly linked into the IMS, but could produce 'IMS-type' data. Some, in turn, stood at the other end of the spectrum by arguing that in addition to intelligence gathering technology, specialist satellites, signals and communications intercepts, NTM should cover human intelligence sources as well. (Johnson 1997)

[118] In its model treaty, Iran did mention NTM information in this connection, but gave such data only a supplementary role (CD/1384, 1996: 21).

established by the treaty. While supporting OSI as a means to determine facts relating to compliance with the CTBT, the Iranians were of the opinion that before resorting to inspections, the states parties should make every effort to clarify and resolve, among themselves or with or through the CTBTO, any matter causing concern about possible treaty non-compliance. Only if such clarification and consultation efforts would prove futile, Iranian representatives emphasized, should the OSI mechanism be set in motion. (CD/PV.726, 1996: 6 and CD/1384, 1996: 16–17, 19)

In regards to the OSI decision-making procedure, the Islamic Republic called for the adoption of a two-stage process. For the initial phase of an OSI, the Iranians advocated a procedure in which the inspection would go ahead unless a majority of three-quarters of the CTBTO's Executive Council was against it. In this early phase, Iran's negotiators put forth, the inspectors would have the right to conduct visual inspection of the area of a suspected nuclear explosion from the air, on the ground, as well as on and in the water. Also, they would be entitled to make aerial overflights of the area and conduct more focused monitoring, such as seismological and radiation measurements. If needed, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued, the Executive Council could, after having reviewed the report prepared by CTBTO inspectors, decide on a consecutive phase of an OSI by a two-thirds majority of all members present and voting. During the second inspection phase, the Iranians envisaged, the inspectors would be allowed to resort to more thorough and sophisticated inspection activities. (CD/1384, 1996: 21–23, 57)

The Executive Council

Given the Executive Council's central role in the verification-related decision-making of the planned CTBTO, it was not surprising that the council's composition became a hotly debated subject during the negotiations. The Islamic Republic called for the establishment of a 65-member Executive Council elected by the Conference of the States Parties and composed of representatives from five regional groupings.[119] Iranian delegates emphasized that each state party should have the right to serve, in accordance with the principle of rotation, in the council and condemned the efforts by NWS and

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[119] The regional groups listed by Iran were as follows: Africa (with 15 seats in the Executive Council), Asia (16 seats), Eastern Europe (8 seats), Latin America and the Caribbean (11 seats), and Western Europe and others (15 seats) (CD/1384, 1996: 9).

some other countries to secure permanent seats in it. Still, the Iranians did not rule out the possibility that an individual state within a regional group could be continuously prevented from serving on the Executive Council. Ultimately, the Iranians noted, it was the regional groups' prerogative to determine which countries were designated to the council. (CD/1384, 1996: 9; CD/PV.726, 1996: 8 and Johnson 1997)

This Iranian stance was tightly linked with the Islamic Republic's strong rejection of the prevailing view at the negotiations of how the regional groups themselves ought to be delineated. At the heart of the matter was a dispute over Israel's affiliation. Whereas most delegations supported the formula in which Israel would be placed to the regional group of Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, the Islamic Republic wanted Israel to be considered as part of the Western countries. Explaining their position in the matter, the Iranians pointed out that if Israel was to be placed among the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, that group's work would be coloured by constant "political problems" and the process of forming an Executive Council would become extremely difficult. In the end, and to the Islamic Republic's disappointment, the majority view prevailed.[120] (CD/PV.745, 1996: 14 and A/50/PV.124, 1996: 11)

The preamble

Another question which the representatives of the Islamic Republic put major emphasis on during the CTBT negotiations was the content of the treaty's preamble. As the preamble would set the political context for the whole document, the Iranians wanted to influence how the CTBT's meaning and spirit would be understood. Throughout the test-ban talks, Iranian delegates had underscored the treaty's importance as an instrument against horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, as it became clear that the final text would not comprehensively prevent the nuclear powers from modernizing their nuclear arsenals, Iran hoped that the nuclear powers would at least commit themselves to the notion of nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame.[121]

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[120] Article II of the CTBT stipulates that the Executive Council shall consist of 51 members. Of these states, ten will be from Africa, seven from Eastern Europe, nine from Latin America and the Caribbean, seven from the Middle East and South Asia, ten from North America and Western Europe, and finally, eight from South-East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East.

[121] As emphasized by the Islamic Republic: "[...] lukewarm claims of commitment to nuclear disarmament can no longer be accepted. The CTBT, with all its shortcomings, should accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament through negotiations on a consecutive series of subsequent treaties." If

Accordingly, while expressing their dissatisfaction with the dominant definition of the CTBT's scope of obligations, which left the door open for nuclear test simulations, the officials of the Islamic Republic signalled their country's readiness to go along with the prevailing scope formulation if, in return, the nuclear powers would accept the inclusion of the objective of "total elimination of all nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date within a time-bound framework" into the treaty's preamble. Iran put forth text proposals at the CD to support its demand for a diplomatic trade-off[122] and allied with other non-aligned countries in the matter. On 27 June 1996, for example, Iran and 12 other NAM countries[123] presented a joint working paper in which they proposed text passages for the CTBT's preambular paragraphs. The NAM initiative emphasized the role of the treaty in curbing vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, in addition to which the NAM delegations' text proposals made mention of complementary talks on a "comprehensive phased programme with agreed time-frames for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery at the earliest possible time," as well as affirmed the states parties' commitment to such negotiations. (CD/PV.740, 1996: 25–26; CD/PV.726, 1996: 6 and CD/NTB/WP.336, 1996: 1)

Yet, once again, the Iranians experienced a diplomatic defeat. Due to strict U.S., British, and French opposition to treaty language alluding to the curbing of nuclear weapon development as an objective or purpose of the CTBT, the preamble of the final treaty text only noted that the CTBT would constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and that an end to all nuclear explosions constituted a meaningful step in the realization of a systematic process to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Islamic Republic strongly criticized the three nuclear powers' negotiation stance[124] and stated that the final draft's references to nuclear disarmament were inadequate. As a result, the Iranians summarized, the treaty text did "not meet the requirements of its mandate." (Johnson 1997; A/51/PV.4, 1996: 27 and A/50/PV.125, 1996: 9)

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the CTBT would not be placed in "its appropriate nuclear disarmament context," the Iranians stressed, it would lose its meaning. (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 12; A/50/PV.125, 1996: 9 and CD/PV.740, 1996: 25)

[122] See the Islamic Republic's model CTBT of February 1996 (CD/1384, 1996: 2–3) and CD/PV.745 (1996: 12–13).

[123] The countries in question were as follows: Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela.

[124] Iranian offcials lamented that any notion of introducing time-frames, even flexible ones, for measures leading to nuclear disarmament had been rejected and even ridiculed by the three NWS (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 10).

The adoption of the CTBT

Iran's subsequent announcement that it could not accept the final draft of the CTBT stemmed not only from the Islamic Republic's discontent with the treaty's preamble, but had ultimately also to do with two other questions: the composition of the CTBTO's Executive Council and the role of NTM data in verification. As the final text neither corresponded to Iran's desire to have Israel removed from the regional group of Middle Eastern and South Asian countries[125] nor ruled out the possibility that OSI would be launched based on information derived from NTM,[126] the Islamic Republic adopted an obstructionist diplomatic course. Together with India – whose negotiators had blocked the adoption of the final text of the CTBT by consensus as well as prevented the text from being attached to the final report of the CD's test-ban committee –, the Islamic Republic refused to allow the CD to transmit the test-ban committee's final report to the UN General Assembly. (CD/PV.745, 1996: 12; A/50/PV.124, 1996: 10–11 and Johnson 1997)

Justifying its diplomacy, Iran maintained that the CTBT had failed to meet the expectations of the great majority of states. On the one hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that the final text had "grossly tilted towards the position of a few nuclear-weapon states and their allies." Once again, the Iranians protested, international disarmament negotiations had been guided by the notion that those who possess and use, or are prepared to use, nuclear weapons and other WMD enjoy a privileged status among nations, whereas the others are only expected to compromise on their vital national interests. (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 11; CD/PV.743, 1996: 22 and CD/PV.745, 1996: 13)

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic alluded to the negotiation process itself and labelled it as "undemocratic and dogmatic." According to Iranian officials, the nuclear powers had dictated the negotiations' course and, especially at critical stages, drawn the limits to which issues were and were not allowed to be discussed. In addition to having made the crucial decisions on the CTBT's content behind the scenes and among themselves, the Iranians complained, the nuclear powers had strongly pressured other participants to succumb to their demands. Given the nature of the 1994–1996 negotiations, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted, it was highly ironic that great

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[125] See Annex 1 to the CTBT.
[126] See article IV of the CTBT.

doubt existed about whether those same powers would ever actually ratify the treaty. (A/51/PV.4, 1996: 27; A/50/PV.124, 1996: 11 and CD/PV.745, 1996: 13)

In the face of the CD's inability to accept the CTBT or to transmit the treaty text to the UN General Assembly, the government of Australia announced, on 22 August 1996, that it would put a resolution to the UN for the adoption of the CTBT. This was officially done on 9 September, with the support of 127 co-sponsoring nations. The UN General Assembly adopted the CTBT the next day,[127] and in the end, Iran was among the 158 countries voting for the adoption.[128] The Islamic Republic was also among the first governments to sign the test-ban treaty on 24 September 1996. Iran's foreign minister explained the Islamic Republic's decision to sign the CTBT after all in the following terms: "We, along with many other non-aligned countries, will join the signatories of this Treaty solely because of our commitment to be an active participant in any effort to combat the inhumane weapons of mass destruction."[129] (Johnson 1997 and A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28)

5.2.3 The Islamic Republic and peaceful uses of nuclear energy

5.2.3.1 Iran's nuclear program

During the period between the end of the Iran–Iraq war in July 1988 and the signing of the CTBT in September 1996, Iranian authorities continued to repudiate the persistent claims that the Islamic Republic's nuclear power program was serving military purposes. Such accusations had gained momentum after the 1980–1988 war as the Iranians had reconfirmed their commitment to a national nuclear project, and they became increasingly common in the aftermath of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict. The

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[127] The CTBT was adopted by 158 votes to 3. India, Libya, and Bhutan voted against, whereas Tanzania, Cuba, Syria, Lebanon, and Mauritania abstained.

[128] Iran made the following statement before the decisive vote at the UN on 10 September: "We are [...] left with one choice, a choice between having a flawed treaty or abandoning the treaty altogether: an unwanted choice indeed. In our overall assessment, therefore, and on the basis of our desire for the nuclear-test ban, we would go along with the decision here, while reserving our position on the points we have stressed throughout the negotiations" (A/50/PV.124, 1996: 11–12).

[129] It should be noted here that Iran's signature of the CTBT was supplemented with enclosed declarations in which the Islamic Republic expressly stated its dissatisfaction with the CTBT's preamble, with the composition of the treaty organization's Executive Council, as well as with the role of NTM data in verification. For the content of the Iranian declarations, see <http://disarmament.un.org:8080/TreatyStatus.nsf>.

newly revealed efforts of Iraq to clandestinely produce nuclear arms[130] had strengthened the Western governments' belief that the proliferation of WMD, and especially of nuclear armaments, in developing countries had become the central security threat of the post-Cold War world. Iran was commonly referred to as one of the potential Third World proliferators.[131]

As always, the representatives of the Islamic Republic strongly rejected the suggestions that their country was interested in nuclear weapons.[132] There were a number of reasons, Iranian officials emphasized, that explained their country's aversion to those armaments. First of all, religious, moral, and humanitarian considerations ruled out the Islamic Republic's acquisition of nuclear weapons.[133] The experience of being the latest victim of WMD use, the Iranians maintained, had only strengthened their country's understanding of the evil nature of nuclear weapons and other WMD.[134] Secondly, the officials of the Islamic Republic referred to the military uselessness of nuclear armaments. Nuclear weapons would not contribute to Iran's security, the Iranian argument went, because the major powers would still be capable of targeting and destroying Iranian nuclear sites, and because Iran would always be faced with countries with more powerful nuclear arsenals.[135] Finally, the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed that Iran simply did not have the financial resources and the technological capabilities for a national nuclear weapons program (Shahabi 1994: 280 and Hashim 1995: 67).

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[130] The IAEA – whose Iraq Action Team had been given the task, in April 1991, to investigate Iraq's nuclear weapon efforts – discovered in the course of 1991 that Iraq had been trying to secretly produce nuclear arms. The actitivities and findings of the Iraq Action Team will be discussed in greater detail below in section 5.2.5.1.

[131] Iran was regarded as one of the countries alternatively characterized in the West and particularly in the United States as "rogue," "maverick," "outlaw" or "backlash" states. Such countries were believed to be sufficiently immoral to use WMD or to employ terrorists to do the work on their behalf. It was claimed at the time, among others, that the Islamic Republic was showing increased interest in research activities related to uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. Moreover, it was claimed that Iran was secretly developing gas centrifuges for enriching uranium at several locations in the country. In this context, there was also discussion about Iranian efforts to induce Pakistan to help the Islamic Republic in the area of uranium enrichment. (Wright 2002: 8 and Albright and Hibbs 1992: 11)

[132] See A/C.1/44/PV.13 (1989: 11); A/49/PV.5 (1994: 39) and the pronouncements cited in Chubin (1994: 53, 101).

[133] See GC/XXXVI/OR.345 (1992: 23) and the pronouncements cited in Arnett (1998b: 39).

[134] This point was made, among others, by the head of the AEOI at the IAEA in November 1992 (GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 23).

[135] For the argument that nuclear weapons were militarily useless to Iran, see the statements made by Ayatollah Khamenei in July 1992 (cited in Chubin 1994: 53), by Akbar Turkan, the Islamic Republic's defence minister, in February 1993 (cited in *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Issues and Stances*, 1993: 784), and by deputy foreign minister Muhammad Javad Larijani in October 1995 (cited in Arnett 1998b: 42).

In addition to explaining why the Islamic Republic was not interested in nuclear weapons, Iranian officials kept on explicating the motives behind their country's nuclear program. Chronic need for additional electricity generating capacity in a country that was undergoing post-war reconstruction was presented as the central explanation. Relatedly, the Iranians noted that the objective of reducing Iran's reliance on fossil fuels in electricity production and of preserving those fuels for export was another paramount consideration.[136] Still another key motive for their program, Iranian officials stressed, was to upgrade their country's scientific, technical, and industrial infrastructure by taking advantage of the various applications of nuclear technology.[137] Also, Iranian authorities alluded to environmental considerations and described nuclear power as an ecologically sound and beneficial way of producing energy.[138] Lastly, the Iranians pointed out that their country had already devoted huge sums of money to its nuclear program. It would thus be imprudent to let a national investment of great magnitude go to waste.[139]

That the Islamic Republic's announcements of the peaceful nature of its nuclear program continued to be openly questioned by some Western governments, and particularly by the United States and Israel,[140] sparked bitter responses from Iranian authorities. The lies that certain Western governments were spreading, the Iranians claimed, were part of those governments' long-lived political offensive against the Islamic Republic.[141] Iranian officials maintained that the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict and

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[136] In the view of the Islamic Republic, it was imperative that countries rich in indigenous fossil fuel resources "reduce their total dependency on a single depletable commodity and shift their oil-based economy to other industries" (GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 32). In this context, Iranian officials also referred to an estimate according to which by the year 2010, all the oil produced in Iran would be internally consumed (GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 18–19).

[137] See GC/XXXV/OR.334 (1991: 32); *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Issues and Stances* (1993: 784) and Chubin (1994: 50–51). Interestingly, in September 1996, Iran declared at the IAEA that the AEOI "was now ready to transfer to countries which so desired its scientific and technical skills in the fields of agriculture, medicine, isotopes and research and development programmes" (GC/40/OR.2, 1996: 13).

[138] See GC/XXXVI/OR.345 (1992: 26); GC/XXXVII/OR.354 (1993: 29) and GC/40/OR.2 (1996: 12–13).

[139] See GC/XXXV/OR.334 (1991: 31); Shahabi (1994: 280) and Roshandel (1996a: 156–157). It should be noted that the information provided by Iranian officials about the costs of their country's nuclear power program was inconsistent. In September 1989, for example, Iran stated that it had already invested more than $3 billion in its nuclear project (GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 29). In 1990, Iranian officials spoke of a sum of "almost $4 billion" (GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 16) as well as of a national investment of "more than $4 billion" (NPT/CONF.IV/SR.8, 1990: 149). In 1994, however, the estimate given by the Iranians shrunk to "over $2 billion" (Shahabi 1994: 280).

[140] For American and Israeli statements accusing Iran of efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, see the pronouncements cited in Amirahmadi (1998: 2).

[141] As concluded by the head of the AEOI in 1993: "[...] the West has embarked on a conspiracy against our independent country" (*Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Issues and Stances*, 1993: 784). Also see GC/XXXVII/OR.354 (1993: 29–30) and GC/40/OR.2 (1996: 13–14).

Saddam Hussein's recently discovered nuclear weapons program were being used as pretexts under which Western governments were denigrating the Islamic Republic by equating its military policies with those of Iraq.[142] Illicit trafficking of fissile material from nuclear sites in the former Soviet Union, the Iranians claimed, was another phenomenon that was being exploited to baselessly label the Islamic Republic as a nuclear proliferator.[143] As far as Israel was concerned, Iran said that the "false accusations spread by the Zionist-sponsored media" stemmed, above all, from Israel's effort to justify the existence of its nuclear weapons and to retain its technological superiority in the nuclear field in the Middle East.[144]

According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, Iran was paying a very heavy price for the politically motivated accusations made against it. Due to the false claims, the Iranians pointed out, Iran's access to peaceful applications of nuclear energy had been drastically curtailed. As a case in point, Iranian authorities referred to the nuclear reactor project at Bushehr which continued to officially constitute the core of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. Although the Iran–Iraq war had ended and the conditions for resuming construction activities at the site had become favourable, Iranian officials lamented, the German government had refused to issue the required export licences for the completion of the Bushehr-1 plant.[145] Also, Iranian officials maintained, the Islamic Republic's nuclear research activities were suffering from

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[142] See A/49/PV.34 (1994: 10) and A/50/PV.47 (1995: 2).

[143] As noted by the representative of the Islamic Republic at the IAEA in September 1995: "[...] illicit trafficking [from the former Soviet Union] should not be used as a pretext for violating the sovereignty of States or depriving them of the right to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy" (GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 21). It was believed at the time that Iranian agents had been trying to obtain enriched uranium, among others, from Tajikistan and Kazakhstan (Albright and Hibbs 1992: 11 and Shaffer 2003).

[144] See GC/XXXVI/OR.345 (1992: 25) and Roshandel (1996b: 58).

[145] Given that Germany was not willing to bend in the Bushehr issue, in August 1996, Iran filed a lawsuit with the International Commerce Commission in which it asked for $5.4 billion in compensation for Germany's failure to comply with the commission's 1982 ruling. In that ruling, the ICC had obligated the German firm Kraftwerk Union to deliver all the Bushehr-related plant materials and components stored outside Iran to the Islamic Republic. Yet, the legal action taken by Iran did not change Germany's diplomatic approach to the Bushehr matter. As far as Iranian-French nuclear relations were concerned, in 1991, the authorities of the Islamic Republic – who had cancelled Iran's dealings with Eurodif in 1980 – began to pressure the French to supply Iran with enriched uranium. Nevertheless, the Iranian efforts proved unsuccessful, for Eurodif maintained that it was no longer under the obligation to make deliveries to Iran because the supply contract between the parties had expired in 1990. Even though – as a result of the settlement, in 1991, of a legal case that the Iranian government had filed against France – the Islamic Republic managed to retain an indirect share in Eurodif, the French government let it be known that it would prevent transfers of enriched uranium from France to Iran. (Koch and Wolf 1997: 128; Sahimi 2003 and Albright and Hibbs 1992: 10)

tightened export restrictions in the supplier countries.[146] (GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 29; GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 16 and GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 30)

As a result of what Iranian authorities characterized as nuclear "apartheid"[147] or "new colonialism,"[148] the Islamic Republic said it had been forced to look for alternative sources of nuclear technology.[149] China and Russia were named as Iran's new principal nuclear cooperation partners. Iranian officials declared that with the help of the two countries, their country wanted not only to finish the Bushehr project, but also to acquire additional nuclear reactors and research facilities. The Iranians also voiced their hope that, in future, nuclear energy would account for 10–20 percent of their country's energy needs (GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 26; GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 30 and Chubin 1994: 51–52).

In 1992, China agreed in principle to supply the Islamic Republic with two nuclear power reactors. In addition, the two parties began negotiating possible deals for research reactors and nuclear fuel-cycle technology. Yet, once again, the Islamic Republic's nuclear plans were compromised by U.S. diplomacy. As part of an agreement, reached in 1997, on the activation of bilateral nuclear cooperation between the United States and China, the U.S. administration of president Clinton succeeded in persuading the Chinese government to forgo major nuclear collaboration with Iran. Resultantly, China terminated, among others, its work on a uranium conversion plant that was under construction in Isfahan.[150] (Einhorn and Samore 2002: 52 and *Strategic Comments* 2003a)

The Clinton administration managed to influence the scope of Iranian-Russian nuclear relations as well. Although the United States failed to convince Russia not to sign an agreement to finish the Bushehr-1 reactor with Iran – a $800 million contract to

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[146] Moreover, the Iranians asserted that the accusations made against their country were undermining the credibility of the NPT, increasing international tensions, and escalating the arms race in the Middle East. The U.S. and Israeli pronouncements which envisaged the destruction of Iran's nuclear facilities as a means to stop its nuclear program were declared by the representatives of the Islamic Republic as particularly irresponsible. Ironically, the Iranians added, it was the military nuclear programs of countries like the United States and Israel that had brought peaceful nuclear programs – such as the one in Iran – into disrepute. (A/48/PV.14, 1993: 23; GC/40/OR.2, 1996: 11–12 and GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 28)

[147] See GC/40/OR.2 (1996: 8).

[148] See GC/XXXV/OR.334 (1991: 29).

[149] For details about the Islamic Republic's post-Iran–Iraq war efforts to acquire nuclear materials and technology, see Eisenstadt (1996: 110–112); Koch and Wolf (1997: 127) and Sahimi (2003). As demonstrated by these sources, Iran's nuclear procurement activities faced major obstacles because of the supplier countries' export control measures.

[150] Other areas in which the Chinese had assisted the Islamic Republic's nuclear efforts prior to the 1997 agreement between the United States and China had included uranium mining and laser enrichment (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 33).

this effect was concluded between Russia and the Islamic Republic in January 1995[151] – the Clinton administration did succeed in annulling what turned out to be a secret protocol to the 1995 Bushehr deal. In the secret protocol, Russia had committed itself to supplying the Islamic Republic with key nuclear fuel-cycle facilities, including light water research reactors, fuel fabrication facilities, and an uranium enrichment centrifuge plant. Eventually, in the face of strong U.S. diplomatic pressure, Russia agreed – in what became known as the December 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement – to limit its nuclear cooperation with the Islamic Republic to the project that involved the construction of the Bushehr-1 plant. (Einhorn and Samore 2002: 53)

As the strong U.S. reaction to the Iranian-Russian agreement on Bushehr suggested, the 1995 Bushehr deal merely fuelled international suspicions that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program was geared towards building bombs. To alleviate the concerns over its nuclear intentions, Iran stated, in 1995, that it would not keep the plutonium-laden spent fuel from the Bushehr reactors but return it to Russia for processing (*The New York Times*, 5 May 1995 and *Arms Control Today*, May/June 1996). However, no final agreement on the issue was made between Iranian and Russian authorities.[152]

5.2.3.2 Iran and the implementation of article IV of the NPT

The Islamic Republic's experiences with its own nuclear program continued to heavily influence the Iranian approach to international issues pertaining to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Iranian officials were among the most outspoken critics of nuclear supplier countries' transfer policies and claimed that by not sufficiently assisting developing countries in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, NWS were not living

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[151] The 1995 Bushehr deal based on a protocol that had been signed between the parties already on 6 March 1990. In that document, Russia had agreed to finish Bushehr-1 as well as to build two VVER-type reactors – each plant with a power production capacity of 440 MW – in Iran. Due to financial and technical problems, however, the construction of the VVER-440 reactors never materialized. Still, Iran and Russia continued to keep the issue of VVER plants, as well as the potential construction of the Bushehr-2 plant, on their joint nuclear agenda. According to Feldman, the head of the AEOI stated after the signing of the January 1995 Bushehr agreement that the Islamic Republic planned to build ten nuclear reactors for electricity generation. (Koch and Wolf 1997: 127 and Feldman 1997: 48)

[152] Despite its temporary concession to the Clinton administration, Russia continued to object to the interpretation that the Bushehr agreement would facilitate the building of an Iranian nuclear weapon. To explain their position, Russian authorities maintained that Iran was not in violation of its NPT commitments and that the safeguards of the IAEA would ensure that the light water nuclear power technology Russia was planning to transfer to Iran would not pose a significant proliferation risk.

up to the provisions of article IV of the NPT. Political discrimination, the Iranians asserted,[153] was the main reason for the poor state of Third World countries' nuclear sectors. States that did not have good political relations with the key supplier countries, the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained, were being subjected to export controls, no matter how scrupulously they were observing the provisions of the NPT and their other international obligations.[154] (NPT/CONF.IV/SR.8, 1990: 149; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 23 and A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 23)

Another indication of political discrimination, the Iranians noted, was the fact that countries that had not joined the NPT and committed themselves to IAEA full-scope safeguards continued to have an access to nuclear materials and technology. The case of Israel was mentioned by the Islamic Republic as the prime example. Although Israel pursued an active nuclear weapons program, Iranian officials argued, the United States, in particular, was providing the Israelis with nuclear supplies. Iran strongly condemned what it portrayed as the practice of political double standard and insisted that all states committed to relevant international laws and regulations should be entitled to take full advantage of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. (GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 27; A/51/PV.4, 1996: 28 and GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 30)

Viewing the nuclear supplier countries' export control arrangements as a symbol of political discrimination in international relations, Iran kept on demanding that all nuclear-related export controls not part of the NPT regime, including those of the NSG or the so-called Zangger Committee,[155] should be dissolved as soon as possible. The control measures applied by such "closed-door clubs," Iranian officials argued, violated the provisions of article IV of the NPT as well as the "sovereign rights of states." (A/49/PV.90, 1994: 6; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 3–4, 23 and NPT/CONF.IV/MC.II/SR.3, 1990: 306)

Russia's assurances notwithstanding, the issue of Iranian-Russian nuclear cooperation continued to overshadow the relations between Russia and the United States. (Einhorn and Samore 2002: 53, 56–58)

[153] "Discrimination is the rule and not even the exception," Iranian authorities declared (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 23).

[154] That Iraq had managed – despite being a member of the NPT and under IAEA full-scope safeguards – to pursue a secret nuclear weapons program, the Islamic Republic claimed, was being used as an excuse to tighten export controls against states that had fallen out of the supplier countries' diplomatic favour (A/50/PV.47, 1995: 2). Before the details of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons program had come to light in the aftermath of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, the Islamic Republic had objected to nuclear export controls by arguing that no developing country under IAEA full-scope safeguards had managed to divert its peaceful nuclear activities to military purposes (GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 16).

[155] For the history and the activities of the Zangger Committee, which establishes guidelines for nuclear transfers to non-nuclear-weapons states that are not parties to the NPT, see <http://www.zanggercommittee.org>.

Despite their criticism, however, Iranian authorities expressed their readiness to discuss the issue of export controls if such deliberations were necessary to alleviate nuclear suppliers' proliferation concerns. The Iranians said that they understood the basic reasoning behind the nuclear suppliers' export controls but could not accept the "informal and secretive" nature of those arrangements. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic called for the establishment of a diplomatic forum composed of all NPT states parties that would decide on the application of nuclear export controls. (NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5, 1995: 397; CD/PV.659, 1993: 8 and GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 7)

At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the Islamic Republic asked the delegations to create an ad hoc committee within the NPT framework that would be responsible for formulating export control guidelines which would replace those of the existing extra-NPT mechanisms. Such a body, the Iranians elaborated, should also be charged with the task of ensuring that the non-nuclear parties to the NPT would have a full access, without discrimination, to nuclear materials and technology. Conversely, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, the members of the ad hoc committee should refrain from nuclear relations with countries that had not joined the NPT and accepted IAEA full-scope safeguards. Finally, the Iranians stated that the proposed committee could contemplate measures to strengthen the NPT's verification system as well as to discuss any other issue related to the implementation of the treaty's article IV.[156] (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 313, 377; NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18, 1995: 371, 373 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5, 1995: 398)

Iranian authorities argued that while nuclear supplier countries should phase out their extra-NPT export controls and contribute to the creation of a truly universal export control mechanism, those states should also significantly increase their assistance to developing countries' peaceful nuclear programs.[157] For one thing, the Islamic Republic pointed out, nuclear suppliers should remove the barries that protected proprietary rights

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[156] Prior to the 1995 NPT conference, the Islamic Republic had stated on many occasions that it would support the limited extension of the NPT only if non-nuclear states parties were granted full access to nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes (A/C.1/48/SR.13, 1993: 9; A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39 and Nasseri 1995b: 242). More generally, Iranian officials had argued that the disputes between NPT states parties over nuclear transfers and cooperation were encroaching the treaty's credibility. The Islamic Republic had even gone so far as to warn that "if the objectives of the developing countries in joining international treaties on nuclear weapons and technology were not met, such countries could not be expected to comply with the provisions of such treaties" (GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 7).

[157] Once again, the Islamic Republic demanded explicit cooperation guarantees and called for the conclusion of an "international and legally binding instrument" that would regulate nuclear cooperation between developed and developing countries (NPT/CONF.IV/SR.8, 1990: 150).

and monopolies on certain nuclear technologies.[158] For another, developed states should help developing countries to finance peaceful nuclear plans and to procure the materials, equipment, and technologies needed for such programs.[159] Iran stressed that peaceful nuclear cooperation between states would play a crucial role in preventing the widening of the welfare gap between the North and the South as well as in ensuring peace and stability in the new, post-Cold War world order.[160] Science and technology, the representatives of the Islamic Republic emphasized, should not be treated as the property of certain nations, but be used to benefit the whole mankind.[161]

In the context of their deliberations on the issue of peaceful application of nuclear energy, Iranian officials also raised the question of armed attacks against nuclear facilities that are devoted to peaceful purposes. With Iraq's war-time targeting of Bushehr in mind, and fully cognizant of the U.S. and Israeli threats to bomb Iranian nuclear installations,[162] the Islamic Republic continued to call for the creation of an international treaty prohibiting such attacks. Without an international agreement for the purpose, Iranian officials maintained, states' peaceful nuclear programs would be under constant threat, particularly in conflict-ridden regions such as the Middle East. While warning that armed attacks on nuclear facilities could lead to political crises with catastrophic consequences, the Islamic Republic argued that an international treaty prohibiting attacks against nuclear installations could reduce the danger of radioactive fallout resulting from military strikes at nuclear sites. (GC/XXXIII/COM.5/OR.64, 1989: 9; NPT/CONF.IV/MC.III/WP.6, 1990: 250 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5, 1995: 399)

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[158] See GC/XXXIV/OR.325 (1990: 14).

[159] See NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5 (1995: 399); GC/XXXIII/OR.315 (1989: 28–29) and CD/PV.625 (1992: 4).

[160] See GC/XXXIII/OR.315 (1989: 26–27); GC/XXXVI/OR.325 (1990: 16–17) and GC/XXXV/OR.334 (1991: 31).

[161] See GC/XXXIII/OR. 315 (1989: 25). Also note the following remark in a working paper jointly tabled by Iran and other NAM countries at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference: "[...] all parties to the Treaty have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, services and scientific and technological information and to contribute, alone or in cooperation with other States, to the further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes" (NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5, 1995: 397). It is important to note that, as before, the Islamic Republic insisted that countries that were in violation of their disarmament obligations or had not joined the NPT should not be provided with nuclear assistance (GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 32 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18, 1995: 371).

[162] Following the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, the military scenario of targeting Iran's nuclear facilities and particularly the Bushehr site was increasingly discussed both in the United States and Israel. In January 1994, for example, officials of the U.S. Department of Defense pointed out to NATO countries that the destruction of potential proliferators' nuclear sites was a pillar of the United States' counter-proliferation policy (Feldman 1997: 182).

As far as the content of the Iranian-promoted international treaty was concerned, the Islamic Republic insisted that the instrument should ban armed attacks both against nuclear facilities in operation and installations under construction.[163] In addition, the Iranians noted that the treaty should include a mechanism for punishing the aggressors, for mere condemnations of attacks on nuclear sites would not serve as a deterrent against such acts. Iranian officials pointed out that since an armed attack against a peaceful nuclear installation would constitute a violation of international law, the principles of the UN Charter, as well as the Statute of the IAEA, such an aggression should be immediately examined by the UN Security Council. And while the Security Council would decide on the punitive steps taken in the case of an attack against a nuclear facility,[164] the Iranians continued, the IAEA and the member states of the agency should provide the victim with radiation protection assistance and other necessary help. (GC/XXXII/OR.305, 1988: 21–22; NPT/CONF.IV/MC.III/WP.6, 1990: 250 and GC/XXXIV/COM.5/90, 1990: 2)

Finally, the Islamic Republic called on governments not to ignore the issue of armed attacks against nuclear facilities, for indifference in the matter would only make future attacks more likely. Using Iraq's war-time attacks on Bushehr as an example, Iranian authorities noted that their country's nuclear power program had suffered major setbacks as a result of the Iraqi raids carried out under "unjustifiable pretexts." (GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 30 and A/C.1/44/PV.35, 1989: 38)

5.2.4 The Islamic Republic and the IAEA

5.2.4.1 Iran's views on the agency's tasks

While seeking to secure their access to nuclear materials and technology and to convince the international community of the peaceful nature of their country's nuclear activities, the authorities of the Islamic Republic constantly called on the IAEA to help

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[163] As declared by the Islamic Republic at the IAEA soon after the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war had taken effect: "The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that military attacks against all nuclear facilities and installations intended for peaceful applications at any stage of construction, at any time during the suspension of construction activities or at any stage or utilization and/or operation should be prohibited" (GC/XXXII/COM.5/OR.60, 1988: 6).

[164] According to the draft resolution submitted by Iran at the IAEA in September 1990, the depositories of the NPT, in their capacity as permanent members of the Security Council, had a special responsibility "to give full consideration to all appropriate measures to be undertaken by the Security Council in order to

Iran and other developing countries in their nuclear efforts. Iranian officials demanded that the IAEA should support developing countries' peaceful nuclear programs by increasing its technical assistance to them and by helping Third World states to finance national nuclear projects, for example, through a special fund established for the purpose. In addition, the Iranians maintained that the IAEA was responsible for encouraging and coordinating international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy as well as for making sure that nuclear suppliers do not baselessly prevent developing countries from procuring nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes. (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 313, 376–377; GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 23 and GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 28)

Generally, the Islamic Republic claimed, the IAEA's promotional and regulatory activities were not in balance. In the Iranian view, the agency had increasingly become a verification body which was neglecting the task of supporting the member states' nuclear projects. While the agency's verification activities enjoyed secure funding, Iranian officials noted, its promotional efforts continued to rely on the member states' voluntary donations.[165] Iran called on the IAEA to restore the balance in its activities and said that if the agency failed to do so, its credibility, together with that of the NPT, would be seriously compromised. (NPT/CONF.IV/MC.III/SR.2, 1990: 380; GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 16–17 and GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 20)

Iran's efforts to facilitate and promote developing countries' nuclear activities aside, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed that the IAEA should defend Third World states against the ungrounded accusations that those countries were interested in nuclear weapons. According to the Iranians, the agency should make it clear that it carried the sole responsibility for verifying non-nuclear-weapon states' compliance with the NPT and that its safeguards system provided sufficient assurances that NNWS were

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deal with the situation, including measures under Article VII of the United Nations Charter" (GC/XXXIV/COM.5/90, 1990: 2).

[165] The Islamic Republic was of the view that the costs of the IAEA's verification activities were too high. Although the Iranians welcomed the so-called voluntary offer agreements between NWS and the IAEA, they regarded the verification of the nuclear powers' civilian nuclear materials and facilities as an excessive burden to the agency's already meager budget (GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 27 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/WP.5, 1995: 399). Similarly, the Islamic Republic was not happy that the IAEA's safeguards expenses were rising due to increased utilization of nuclear energy in the developed world. Iranian officials found it "unacceptable to expect a Member State whose nuclear facilities had not changed since the establishment of the Agency, or which still had no such facilities, to cover the costs of safeguards implementation in other Member States which had increased their nuclear capacity and the number of their facilities at an enormous rate" (GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 17). Looking at the IAEA's responsibilities and activities, the Iranians were of the opinion that "the Agency's assistance should be

complying with their treaty obligations. Before the IAEA's discovery of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapon program in 1991, the Islamic Republic had also asked the agency to point out that "no developing country had yet succeeded in diverting nuclear material from a power plant for military purposes."[166] (GC/XXXII/OR.305, 1988: 20–21; NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 377 and GC/XXXIV/OR.325, 1990: 16)

As far as the IAEA's verification activities in Iran were concerned, continuous suspicions about the Islamic Republic's nuclear intentions prompted Iranian authorities to declare, in 1991, that they were prepared to allow the IAEA to have more inspection freedoms than warranted by the safeguards agreement between the two parties. Whereas in 1989 the Islamic Republic had affirmed that there would be no restrictions on IAEA inspectors travelling to Iran to conduct routine inspections of the country's declared nuclear materials and facilities, now the Iranians informed that that they would let the IAEA to visit any location in the country to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear activities. (GC/XXXIII/OR.315, 1989: 30 and Zak 2002: 19)

Pursuant to the Islamic Republic's declaration, in February 1992 the IAEA visited six nuclear facilities in Iran of which three had never been inspected by the agency. Discussing the results of its trip, the inspection team of the IAEA said that it had been allowed to visit the locations agreed on[167] without restrictions and that Iran's activities had been found to be consistent with the peaceful application of nuclear energy. In November 1993, the IAEA conducted a follow-up inspection in Iran by visiting relevant facilities in Isfahan, Karaj, and Tehran. What made the November 1993 visit special was that prior to the inspection, the IAEA had been provided with specific Iran-related intelligence by the U.S. government. The data provided by the Americans had included information originally gathered by the Iranian opposition group MKO suggesting that

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given primarily to developing countries and the burden of safeguards activities should logically be borne by industrialized nations" (GC/XXXII/OR.305, 1988: 20).

[166] When discussing the IAEA's safeguards system, the officials of the Islamic Republic regretted that the IAEA safeguards did not apply to the military nuclear facilities and materials of NWS which, in the Iranian view, constituted the real source of the nuclear proliferation threat. In the same manner, Iranian officials continued to find it difficult to understand why Israel and other non-parties to the NPT, "with well-known and entirely non-peaceful nuclear programs," were allowed to be members of the IAEA and even benefit from the agency's technical assistance. Those countries' reluctance to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards, the Islamic Republic argued, seriously jeopardized the agency's credibility. (GC/XXXII/OR.305, 1988: 22; GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 24 and NPT/CONF.IV/MC.II/SR.3, 1990: 305–306)

[167] The details and the procedures of the IAEA's 1992 visit to Iran had been agreed on beforehand by the two parties and did not include all the agency's standard inspection measures. As the inspectors themselves subsequently underscored, the conclusions drawn by them were limited to the facilities and sites inspected by the IAEA team and were of relevance only to the time of the team's visit. (Zak 2002: 20)

the Islamic Republic was working on a nuclear weapons program. In the end, however, the IAEA concluded, once again, that it had found no evidence of such illegal activities and that the Islamic Republic was in good standing with the NPT. (Zak 2002: 19–21)

Not surprisingly, Iranian authorities quickly started to allude to the IAEA's 1992 and 1993 visits as a clear indication of the fact that the accusations that Iran had nuclear weapons ambitions were baseless and politically motivated.[168] Not only had the IAEA's routine inspections always given a clean bill to their country, the Iranians asserted, but now also the agency's special visits to Iran had testified to the Islamic Republic's unwavering commitment to the NPT.[169] Iran's authorities let it be known that their invitation to the IAEA to conduct 'anytime, anywhere' inspections in their country remained open[170] and argued that this gesture of diplomatic good will on the part of the Islamic Republic should, in itself, put an end to the debate on Iran's nuclear intentions.

5.2.4.2 Iran and the strengthened safeguards system

Although Iranian statements on the IAEA put emphasis on the agency's role as a promoter of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it was the regulatory aspect of the IAEA's mandate that came to dominate the relations between the IAEA and the Islamic Republic. This was not merely due to the routine inspections and the two special visits carried out by the agency in Iran, but it also had to do with the fact that by the early 1990s, a broad international consensus had emerged on the need to strengthen the IAEA's safeguards system.

There were three main factors that had brought about such a consensus. First, the 1991 discovery that Iraq – a state party to the NPT that had only recently been declared by the IAEA to be in full compliance with its treaty obligations – had managed to develop an extensive nuclear weapons program had revealed the safeguards system's

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[168] Furthermore, the results of the IAEA's special visits provided the Islamic Republic with the opportunity to make the general claim that the dangers of horizontal nuclear proliferation were "disproportionately exaggerated" (GC/XXXII/OR.305, 1988: 22).

[169] As one official of the Islamic Republic put it in 1995: "One country, my own, has accepted verification of the most intrusive nature, something similar to challenge inspection in the CWC on an informal basis. The [IAEA] team was allowed to look anywhere information has been received that there may be a possibility of some sort of violation. They went and they came back and said they had the opportunity to go wherever they wished. They had the information from all the countries that had some views about this available to them and they found nothing" (Nasseri 1995b: 263). For other corresponding Iranian statements, see GC/XXXVI/OR.345 (1992: 25); *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Issues and Stances* (1993: 784) and Kharrazi (1994: 126–127).

[170] The head of the AEOI stated in September 1992 that Iran's invitation remained in force because the Islamic Republic simply had nothing to hide (GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 25).

weaknesses. Secondly, North Korea's refusal in 1993 to allow a special IAEA inspection to take place in the country had reinforced the belief that the North Koreans possessed an advanced clandestine nuclear weapons program and demonstrated the limits of the IAEA's verification powers.[171] Thirdly, suspicions that certain other developing countries, among them Iran, were using peaceful nuclear programs as shields for efforts to obtain a nuclear weapons capability had prompted governments to improve the agency's safeguards system. (Zak 2002: 4–6 and Rockwood 2002: 124–125)

The central deficiency in the full-scope safeguards agreements between the IAEA and the non-nuclear parties to the NPT – which are based on the IAEA model document INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) – had been that, under those agreements, the agency's right to carry out inspections had effectively been limited to nuclear facilities and other relevant locations declared to the agency by the states themselves. In other words, the IAEA inspections' purpose had always been to ensure the non-diversion of declared nuclear material to the development of nuclear weapons, whereas the establishment of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities had remained beyond the inspections' scope.[172]

To correct this fundamental shortcoming and to generally improve the regulatory powers of the IAEA, the member states authorized the agency to expand its verification mandate and capabilities. In 1992, as a first step, the IAEA's board of governors made a call for a universal reporting system under which the member states would voluntarily notify the agency of transfers of nuclear equipment and certain non-nuclear materials. The board also affirmed the IAEA's right to resort to special inspections and approved the use of all available information sources by the agency personnel during their

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[171] Following North Korea's inspection refusal, the IAEA had prepared a report to the UN Security Council on North Korea's non-compliance with its safeguards agreement and on the existence of information suggesting that North Korea had failed to declare to the agency all the nuclear materials required to be safeguarded under its agreement with the IAEA. In response, North Korea declared that it would withdraw from the NPT. As already mentioned above, North Korea cancelled its withdrawal decision in June 1993. Moreover, the North Koreans agreed to freeze their nuclear program for the duration of future negotiations with the United States. (Rockwood 2002: 125 and Mansourov 1995: 27)

[172] It should be pointed out that the IAEA model document INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) includes provisions on "special inspections" providing IAEA inspectors with an access to undeclared sites or to locations suspected of containing undeclared nuclear material. In practice, however, the IAEA member states' reserved attitude towards such inspections had made them effectively irrelevant. On the one hand, the member states had viewed the provisions on special inspections as not giving the IAEA unlimited right to seek out undeclared nuclear material or activities. On the other hand, some countries had expressed major political reservations about the concept of special inspections itself. Thus, by the early 1990s, the IAEA had never attempted to exercise the right of special inspections. (Rockwood 2002: 124 and Spector 1993: 156)

inspections. The utilization of intelligence data in the course of the special visits made to Iran in 1992 and 1993 exemplified the new practice.[173] (Zak 2002: 10–11)

Efforts to strengthen the IAEA's safeguards system crystallized into what became known as the agency's "Program 93+2" – the first number pointing to the year the program was launched and the second to the two-year period during which the program was supposed to be executed. The program identified two sets of measures that were believed to improve the IAEA's ability to detect clandestine nuclear activities. The first category of the measures included steps that could be immediately taken within the legal framework of the document INFCIRC/153 (Corr.), such as broader use of unannounced inspections and the employment of advanced technology to remotely monitor the movements of nuclear material. The implementation of these so-called Part I activities was accepted by the IAEA's board of governors in June 1995. (Rockwood 2002: 125–126 and Zak 2002: 12)

The second category of the measures, the so-called Part II measures, was composed of steps that fell outside the IAEA's mandate and whose implementation would require the adoption of additional legal obligations by the member states. A specific Model Additional Protocol – reproduced in the IAEA document INFCIRC/540 (Corr.) – was prepared by the agency for the purpose.[174] By accepting the Additional Protocol, signed on a bilateral basis between the IAEA and the member states, NNWS would commit themselves to providing the agency with much more detailed information about their nuclear activities. Also, under the Additional Protocol, the number and the types of facilities subjected to IAEA inspections would substantially increase. Moreover, the parties to the protocol would be required to contribute to effective implementation of safeguards by streamlining inspection-related national administrative procedures. Finally, the Additional Protocol would give the IAEA the authority to collect environmental samples – which are capable of detecting minute traces of enriched uranium and plutonium – during its inspections both at declared and undeclared sites.[175]

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[173] It is important to note that the IAEA's 1992 and 1993 visits to Iran were not special inspections as defined in INFCIRC/153 (Corr.). As already noted above, the details of the inspections had been specifically agreed on beforehand, in addition to which the inspection team had not made use of all the IAEA's standard inspection measures.

[174] The secretariat of the IAEA introduced a draft Model Additional Protocol to the board of governors in June 1996. A special committee set by the board deliberated on the draft for almost a year. On 15 May 1997, the board of governors officially approved the document. (Rockwood 2002: 126)

[175] This paragraph draws upon *Arms Control Association Fact Sheet* (2004); Rockwood (2002: 130–134) and Zak (2002: 14–16 and 26–27).

The Iranians – who were widely viewed as potentially seeking nuclear weapons and whose attitude towards the strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards system was therefore of major international interest – declared their support for the efforts to improve the agency's verification capabilities.[176] Given that transparency had always been a key element of the Islamic Republic's nuclear diplomacy, Iranian officials asserted, it was only logical that their country would support the reform of the IAEA's verification system and the strengthening of the NPT's effectiveness.[177] The fact that the IAEA had failed to detect Iraq's violations of the NPT had a major influence on Iran's approach to the issue of strengthened safeguards. In 1992, for example, Iranian authorities expressed their hope that the measures adopted by the agency to improve its regulatory capabilities would prevent further violations of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East.[178] (GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 21 and GC/XXXVI/OR.352, 1992: 18)

Despite their general support to improved IAEA safeguards, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic made it clear that they had a number of reservations about the strengthening process. First of all, they posed the question that if some countries continued to question the relevance of the IAEA's safeguards system, even in its improved form, why should governments embark on the arduous strengthening process in the first place? In Iran's view, the process would serve its purpose only if states recognized that the strengthened safeguards would constitute the sole basis for drawing conclusions about NPT member states' compliance with their treaty obligations. Powerful countries, the Iranians demanded, should refrain from letting their own information sources and interpretations to undermine the credibility and the effectiveness of the IAEA's verification system.[179] (CD/PV.659, 1993: 5; NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 313 and A/50/PV.5, 1995: 30–31)

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[176] See GC/XXXVII/OR.354 (1993: 27); NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18 (1995: 371) and A/50/PV.47 (1995: 1).

[177] That the Islamic Republic had invited the IAEA to carry out 'anytime, anywhere' visits in Iran was referred to by the Iranians as a good example of their nuclear transparency (GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 27).

[178] Iran called on Middle Eastern states to support the regulatory functions of the IAEA "in a spirit of international co-operation, as a step towards the establishment of peace and security in the sensitive region of the Middle East" (GC/XXXVI/OR.352, 1992: 19).

[179] One reason for the diplomatic emphasis put by Iran on the role of the IAEA's verification system was that even though the Iranians definitely welcomed the post-Gulf conflict disarmament of Iraq, they had mixed feelings about the way in which Iraq's disarmament was being carried out. The Islamic Republic feared that ad hoc arrangements or "unconventional inspections" – such as those by UNSCOM and the IAEA's Iraq Action Team, both of which had been created by the major powers through the UN Security Council resolution 687 of April 1991 – would become generally accepted and begin to sideline the multilateral IAEA mechanism. (GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 6–7)

Generally, the Islamic Republic insisted that the strengthened safeguards should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner.[180] Iranian officials argued that the IAEA's improved verification system should not be used as a tool to exert additional pressure on, or to penalize, certain member states because of political reasons. Each country, the Iranians stressed, should be treated as an individual case and the violations of IAEA safeguards in the recent past should not influence the conclusions drawn about other member states' compliance with the NPT. All NPT member states, and not only NNWS, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out, should commit themselves to the measures specified in Program 93+2. (GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 30; GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 6 and Zak 2002: 28–29)

Like many other NNWS, Iran was worried about the effects of strengthened safeguards on the "sovereign rights of states." In other words, it wanted to be sure that enhanced monitoring of the nuclear activities of NNWS would not compromise its commercial, industrial, technological, and military secrets. Similarly, the officials of the Islamic Republic insisted that the strengthening of the IAEA's verification machinery should not have a negative impact on NPT states parties' economic and technological development or on their legitimate right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.[181] (Rockwood 2002: 129–130; GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 23–24 and GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 20)

Another stated Iranian worry was that the IAEA was increasingly turning into a regulatory body. In order to maintain the balance between the agency's regulatory and promotional functions, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, the steps taken to extend the regulatory tasks of the IAEA had to be complemented with measures to improve developing countries' access to nuclear transfers. Even if not explicitly linking its support for strengthened IAEA safeguards with other issues, Iran did point out that in exchange for subjecting their nuclear activities to increased international scrunity, NNWS and developing countries, in particular, were entitled to assurances of nuclear transfers and international nuclear assistance. Such a diplomatic concession on the part of nuclear supplier countries, the Iranians stressed, would make the issue of

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[180] The Islamic Republic's representative at the IAEA, for example, emphasized in September 1996 that the agency's ability to implement safeguards in an equitable manner was a "prerequisite for their widespread acceptance and survival" (GC/40/OR.2, 1996: 12).

[181] At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, Iran's delegation asked the conference to declare that "once the safeguards system is strengthened, no nuclear-weapon State may attempt to impede or deny access by non-nuclear weapon States parties to the Treaty to nuclear materials, equipment and technology

strengthened safeguards more acceptable to the member states of the IAEA.[182] (GC/XXXV/COM.5/OR.79, 1991: 16; GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 29 and GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 20)

Placing the international diplomatic debate on IAEA safeguards into a wider context, the Islamic Republic pointed out that from the viewpoint of nuclear disarmament, enhanced international monitoring of the nuclear activities of NNWS was ultimately a secondary issue (Nasseri 1995b: 242). According to Iranian officials, there were much more topical nuclear issues that needed immediate international attention. Vertical proliferation of nuclear armaments, the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained, was one of such key issues. Regional nuclearization was another problem specifically referred to by the Iranians.

5.2.5 Iran and regional nuclear disarmament

5.2.5.1 The Iraq problem

Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran during the 1980–1988 war had a significant effect on Iranian decision-makers' calculations about the factors that threatened their country's security. Iraq's crossing of the WMD threshold introduced a wholly new dimension into Iranian–Iraqi relations and forced Iran's policy-makers to seek solutions to the security challenges presented by Iraq's WMD even after the war between the two countries had ended.

The state of Iraqi nuclear activities was one of the questions that continued to trouble Iranian authorities in the post-war era. While the Islamic Republic's bombing of Iraq's Osirak reactor on 30 September 1980 had already suggested that the Iranians had few, if any, doubts about the motives that steered Iraq's nuclear efforts, it is not clear to what extent the officials of the Islamic Republic were knowledgeable about the details of Iraq's nuclear activities. Whatever the case, prior to the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict Iran expressed its concern that "some states" in the Middle East either possessed nuclear

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for peaceful purposes unless non-compliance is verified and established by the IAEA" (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 352).

[182] According to the Islamic Republic, the execution of strengthened IAEA safeguards would enhance developing countries' demands that NWS implement the provisions of article IV of the NPT. If developing countries were expected to accept increasingly intrusive international inspections, Iranian officials stated, then NWS would have to reward those NNWS found to be in compliance with the NPT

armaments or were trying to acquire them (A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 11).[183] That the Islamic Republic was reluctant to explicitly name Iraq as a country seeking nuclear weapons was presumably related to Iran's desire not to burden its already inflammable relations with Iraq and not to provoke wider Arab sentiments. Instead, by putting the spotlight on Israel[184] and simultaneously calling for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East, the Islamic Republic pursued a policy which aimed at diplomatically killing two birds with one stone.

As far as the uncertainty over Iraq's nuclear activities was concerned, the end result of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict turned out to be a blessing to the Iranians. As part of the permanent cease-fire agreement that ended the brief war between the U.S.-led coalition forces and Iraq, the UN Security Council ordered Iraq to eliminate, under international supervision, its WMD programs.[185] Under the Security Council resolution 687 of April 1991, the responsibility for uncovering the details of Iraq's nuclear efforts was given to the IAEA. Iran declared its full support for the agency's activities in Iraq. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, their country would always support international measures taken against countries "misusing nuclear technology." At the same time, however, the Iranians insisted, once again, that Iraq should be treated as an individual case and not "as grounds for a general penalizing of the developing countries." (GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 30 and GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 23)

The IAEA Iraq Action Team's first inspection mission in the country began on 15 May 1991. By the time the government of Saddam Hussein had refused, in December 1998, to allow further international inspections to take place in Iraq, the IAEA had effectively uncovered and dismantled what had turned out to be an ambitious clandestine nuclear program. During its missions in Iraq, involving more than 500 site inspections, the agency supervised, among others, the destruction of more than 50,000 square meters of factory floor space of nuclear program facilities and some 2,000

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by correspondingly increasing their nuclear assistance to NPT states parties from the Third World. (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 313, 377)

[183] Also see Iran's CD pronouncement of 15 March 1990 in which foreign minister Vilayati stressed that the Islamic Republic shared "the concerns about proliferation of nuclear arms in our region" (CD/PV.543, 1990: 13).

[184] In September 1989, for example, the Iranian representative addressing the IAEA said that there could be no doubt that Israel represented the only nuclear threat in the Middle East. According to him, "no other State in the Middle East region could even remotely match Israel's nuclear capabilities." (GC/XXXIII/OR.321, 1989: 6)

[185] In the course of the Gulf conflict, the Islamic Republic had expressed its concern over the intentionally ambiguous U.S. statements which were interpreted by many, Iranian officials included, to mean that the United States would use nuclear weapons in response to an Iraqi employment of WMD (CD/PV.582, 1991: 4 and Freedman and Karsh 1993: 289).

weapon-related items, in addition to which it arranged for the removal from Iraq of all weapons-usable nuclear material as well as accounted for and placed under its control all other known nuclear materials.[186] (Dillon 2002: 41–42)

The discovery of Iraq's clandestine nuclear program in 1991[187] and the subsequent information about the program's magnitude sent shockwaves throughout the Middle East and raised serious questions about the capabilities of the major powers' intelligence services. The widely shared pre-Gulf conflict belief that, between Israel's June 1981 air raid against Osirak and the latter stages of the Iran–Iraq war, Saddam Hussein had done little to pursue his nuclear ambitions was proved fundamentally wrong by the IAEA's inspectors. As it turned out, Iraq had restarted its nuclear efforts in 1982. In parallel with the actual weapons program's initiation, the Iraqis had also begun to study techniques and methods on how to conceal and protect their WMD programs. Iraq's concealment efforts had reportedly been assisted by Soviet intelligence officials.[188] (Feldman 1997: 138; Spector 1993: 138–139 and Al-Marashi 2003)

The advanced nature of Iraq's nuclear program, subsequently neutralized by the IAEA, assumably came as an unpleasant surprise to the Iranians as well.[189] There was a strong belief among Iranian officials that had the Iraqis managed to get hold of a nuclear weapon during the Iran–Iraq war, they would have probably used it against the Islamic Republic.[190] As a result of the UN-mandated disarmament of Iraq, however, the threat

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[186] Most of the IAEA's activities pertaining to the destruction, removal, and rendering harmless of the components of Iraq's nuclear weapons program were completed by November 1992 (*IAEA and Iraqi Nuclear Weapons* 1998). It should be noted that some of Iraq's nuclear facilities had already been destroyed by the U.S.-led coalition forces during the January–February 1991 war in the Gulf. Still, most Iraqi nuclear facilities had not been detected at the time of the hostilities and were later found unharmed by IAEA inspectors. (Cordesman and Wagner 1996: 324–325 and 902–903)

[187] Iraqi officials admitted in October 1991 that work related to the development of nuclear weapons had been carried out in the country (*IAEA and Iraqi Nuclear Weapons* 1998).

[188] In the end, the Iraqis had managed to create a complex concealment apparatus – a network of government ministries, intelligence agencies, and military units – assigned to procure, hide, and defend the country's WMD. For a discussion of the concealment network and how it was employed by Iraqi officials to impede the post-Gulf conflict arms inspections of UNSCOM and the IAEA in the country, see Al-Marashi (2003) and *IAEA and Iraqi Nuclear Weapons* (1998).

[189] The IAEA Iraq Action Team's inspections revealed that, by January 1991, Iraq had procured and domestically produced significant amounts of natural uranium compounds as well as built and commissioned plants to convert such compounds to supply materials for production-scale enrichment processes. Iraq had studied several processes for uranium enrichment – including diffusion, centrifuge and electromagnetic enrichment – and made practical preparations for enrichment activities to take place. Iraq had also been equipping and commissioning a major facility for the production of nuclear weapons. Following the toppling of the regime of Saddam Hussein in April 2003, a former director-general of Iraq's nuclear program estimated that, before the start of the war between Iraq and the coalition forces in 1991, Iraq had been three years away from producing a nuclear bomb. (Dillon 2002: 42 and *IHT*, 10 March 2004)

[190] According to Baram (2001: 29), Iraq restarted its nuclear program after the June 1981 Osirak incident to create a counterforce to the Israeli nuclear arsenal and, probably primarily, to have a superior military

of Iraqi nuclear weapons transformed from a short-term Iranian problem into a more distant worry.[191] While the authorities of the Islamic Republic were well aware of the fact that Iraq had managed to develop dangerous expertise in the nuclear field and could resume its weapons activities at some future time, they felt comfortable enough to declare that following the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, the threat of nuclear weapons and other WMD from within the Persian Gulf region had to a large extent been removed.[192] (Hashim 1995: 63; Chubin 1995: 93–94 and CD/PV.659, 1993: 8)

Iraq's nuclear activities halted and under the watchful eye of the IAEA, the Islamic Republic took advantage of the new circumstances in its security environment by directing its nuclear diplomacy more vehemently against Israel and its nuclear armaments. There was only one country in the Middle East, Iranian officials repeatedly pointed out, that possessed a nuclear weapons capability, and it was Israel that constituted the sole nuclear threat in the region. While carefully following international arms inspectors' activities in Iraq, Iranian authorities tried to score additional diplomatic points by accusing the West and the United States, in particular, of a discriminatory non-proliferation policy in the Middle East. Whereas Iraq, a Muslim country, the Iranians argued, had been subjected to stringent disarmament measures, Israel had been given a free hand to continue its nuclear activities that were driven by military and power political considerations.[193] (A/48/PV.14, 1993: 21; A/C.1/49/PV.22, 1994: 1 and Mashhadi 1995: 81)

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tool available in the Iran–Iraq war. Also Chubin (1996: 147) speaks of the Iraqi effort to seek a "war-winning weapon against Iran."

[191] Based on its findings in Iraq, the IAEA concluded that by December 1998, when the international inspections in the country came to a halt, Iraq had not managed to produce a nuclear weapon. Neither had Iraq produced more than few grams of weapons-usable nuclear material through its indigenous processes, in addition to which the Iraqis had not managed to otherwise acquire weapons-usable nuclear material. Finally, the IAEA was of the opinion that, following its inspections, Iraq had not been able to retain any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapons-usable nuclear material of any practical significance. (Dillon 2002: 42)

[192] Without going into details, Iranian officials maintained that although the "misguided policies of certain regimes" explained the existing proliferation concerns in the Middle East, industrialized countries had also contributed to such worries by "knowingly, or unwittingly," assisting the development of clandestine WMD programs by those very same regimes (GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 23).

[193] In 1991, in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict, the U.S. administration of president George H. W. Bush made a broad arms control initiative which called, among others, for the creation of a ban on the production in, and the importation into, the Middle East of weapons-usable nuclear material. Given that the U.S. proposal dealt only with future production and transfers of fissile materials and did not address the already existing nuclear arsenal of Israel, the Islamic Republic rejected it outright and viewed it as yet another indication of outside powers' policy of double standard in the Middle East. As a diplomatic response to the so-called Bush initiative, the officials of the Islamic Republic underscored the need for an international ban on the transfer of all kinds of nuclear material to Israel. (Chubin 1994: 51 and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.I/WP.9. 1995: 308)

5.2.5.2 The objective of a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East

However, the Islamic Republic's references to Israel's nuclear weapons and to Western governments' more or less open acceptance of the Jewish state's nuclear status were not merely part of Iran's diplomatic posturing in the post-Gulf conflict era. They were also products of the Islamic Republic's general analysis of the security situation in the Middle East. According to Iranian officials, the region was highly volatile and typified, among others, by destabilizing conflicts and rivalries, expansionist state policies, and relentless arms-racing. On top of such characteristics, the Iranians asserted, the stability of the Middle East was seriously marred by the Israeli nuclear arsenal. (A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 58; A/CN.10/PV.201, 1996: 13 and G/40/OR.2, 1996: 9)

In the Islamic Republic's official security thinking, Israel's nuclear weapons played, for the most part, a double role. On the one hand, they were defined by Iranian authorities as a factor that made the existing conflict constellations in the Middle East more dangerous by exponentially raising the potential costs of intra-regional armed hostilities.[194] Pointing to the destructive capacity of Israel's nuclear arsenal, estimated by the Iranians to total some 200 bombs,[195] the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, on the other hand, that Israel's nuclear weapons also formed an independent security threat to the region.[196]

When speaking of Israel's nuclear weapons as an independent menace, Iranian officials stressed that Israel had the capability to destroy any Middle Eastern capital with its nuclear bombs. And while directly threatening the security of the regional states, the Iranians claimed, Israel's nuclear weapons jeopardized international peace and security as well. The authorities of the Islamic Republic were also worried that Israel might use its nuclear arsenal as a tool for political blackmailing. Finally, the Iranians warned that the existence of nuclear weapons in the Middle East subjected the

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[194] For this argument, see Zarif (1995: 120); A/CN.10/PV.201 (1996: 13) and GC/40/OR.2 (1996: 9). In the Iranian assessment, the outbreak of major armed hostilities in the Middle East itself would likely be caused by Israel's "expansionist" and "militarist" policies (*The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 15–16 and NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 99–100).

[195] This Iranian estimate, reported in Chubin (1994: 51), is from 1993.

[196] Take, for example, the following statement made by the Islamic Republic in December 1993 which is indicative of the Iranian way of treating Israel's nuclear weapons as an independent security threat and as equal to other fundamental security problems in the Middle East: "In our view, until the root causes of the current critical situation in the area [the Middle East] have been effectively dealt with and until the IAEA is able to bring all nuclear facilities in the Middle East under its verification system, every State in the region will perceive its national security to be at great risk" (A/48/PV.68, 1993: 17–18).

region to the spectre of accidental nuclear strikes.[197] (Ali 1996: 14; GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 7–8 and Roshandel 1996b: 56)

In the view of the Islamic Republic, Israel's nuclear weapons constituted a major obstacle to arms control and disarmament in the Middle East. By forcing the regional countries to defend themselves against an existential threat, Iranian officials argued, Israel's nuclear arsenal had turned the Middle East into an arena for massive military build-ups and, for example, prevented the major Arab countries from adhering to the CWC and the BTWC, two key international instruments dealing with WMD. Thus, Iranian authorities effectively blamed Israel's nuclear weapons not only for insecurity in the Middle East but also for the fact that Iran – which had not linked its policies in the area of chemical and biological disarmament to Israel's accession to the NPT – had to worry about Arab chemical and biological weapons, too. (NPT/CONF.IV/SR.8, 1990: 149–150; NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 100 and Mashhadi 1995: 82)

By accepting Israel's de facto status as a nuclear power and by supporting its nuclear activities, Iranian officials added, extra-regional powers had substantially reduced the chances of Israel giving up its nuclear armaments and joining the NPT – thereby reinforcing the already disastrous regional implications of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons.[198] The authorities of the Islamic Republic categorically rejected the assertion that Israel, a country surrounded by hostile Arab countries, had a legitimate right to possess nuclear armaments in order to ensure its survival.[199] If Israel was allowed to refer to its geopolitical location as a justification for its nuclear arsenal, the Iranians summed up, then most countries in the world could rightfully use such an argument to

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[197] It should be noted that Iran objected to Israel's nuclear activities also by referring to environmental considerations. By doing so, the Islamic Republic imitated the diplomatic argumentation of Arab governments, and particularly that of Egypt, which, in 1993, started to point to the dangers posed to plant and animal life by Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona. Initially, the Arab countries' allusions to the environmental effects of Israel's nuclear program had been sparked by news reports, breaking out in mid-1993, about possible contamination of water and land in the vicinity of the Dimona reactor. (Feldman 1997: 129, 215–216). The Islamic Republic maintained that the reports about radioactive leaks at Dimona as well as about the hazards linked to the disposal of radioactive waste in the installation's vicinity had not received the international attention they deserved (GC/40/OR.2, 1996: 10). For other Iranian Dimona-related remarks, see GC/XXXVII/OR.354 (1993: 27–28); A/49/PV.34 (1994: 9) and A/50/PV.47 (1995: 2).

[198] Iran warned that outside powers' support of Israel acted as an incentive for the regional states to alleviate their security concerns through the acquisition of WMD (A/CN.10/PV.186, 1994: 22; GC/XXXVIII/OR.3, 1994: 7–8 and A/C.1/49/PV.9, 1994: 15).

[199] Israel – which has not officially declared that its possesses nuclear weapons – believes that its nuclear armaments serve three main purposes: they act as an equalizer in the arms race with the Arabs, as a weapon of last resort in a military confrontation that could put Israel's existence as a state into jeopardy, and finally, as a factor that could persuade Arab governments to accept the existence of the Jewish state and thereby clear the path for peace agreements between Israel and the Arabs. (Feldman 1997: 95–96 and Cohen 1998: 12–14)

acquire nuclear weapons. Frustrated with what they alluded to as outside powers' policy of "selective proliferation," Iranian officials said that the application of diplomatic double standard in the Middle East had given rise to the belief that a "deliberate and conscious policy" of undermining the regional states' security was being pursued by the major powers in the region. (GC/39/OR.3, 1995: 21; Mashhadi 1995: 82 and Zarif 1995: 121)

The Islamic Republic repeatedly insisted that Israel should join the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to IAEA full-scope safeguards.[200] In order to make Israel's NPT membership a reality, Iranian officials demanded, the major powers should end their discriminatory policies in the Middle East and pressure Israel to give up its nuclear armaments. Referring to the Middle East peace process between Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab governments initiated at the 1991 Madrid peace conference, the Islamic Republic rejected the process as another manifestation of the injustice imposed on the region and called on governments not to refrain from pressuring Israel to accede to the NPT for the fear of jeopardizing the on-going peace talks.[201] Similarly, the Iranians took a critical attitude towards the arms control and regional security discussions that were launched to complement the Middle East peace negotiations. As long as all the regional states had not acceded to international instruments banning WMD, Iranian officials noted, such discussions were pointless. In addition, the Iranians – who were not invited to participate in the ACRS meetings – said that no arms control initiative in the Middle East could succeed unless the security concerns of all the regional states were taken into account. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 11–12; Zarif 1995: 120–122, 129–130 and A/47/PV.5, 1992: 51)

While denouncing the ACRS discussions, however, the representatives of the Islamic Republic did comment the content of those talks.[202] Above all, Iranian officials criticized the Israeli stance according to which arms control and disarmament measures in the Middle East were possible only after a comprehensive peace in the region had been achieved. In the Iranian view, the linkage made by Israel was "irrational" because

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[200] Iran stated on many occasions that if Israel did not agree to accede to the NPT before the 1995 NPT Extension and Review Conference, the treaty's extension could be in danger (A/49/PV.5, 1994: 39; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 16 and Zarif 1995: 121). The Islamic Republic also continued to criticize the IAEA for its technical cooperation with Israel as well as to label the agency's item-specific safeguards arrangements with the Israelis as useless (A/49/PV.34, 1994: 9; A/50/PV.47, 1995: 2 and GC/XXXVI/OR.345, 1992: 24).

[201] See GC/XXXVI/OR.351 (1992: 5).

[202] For the details of the ACRS talks and the role of the nuclear weapons question in them, see Feldman (1997: 7–15).

it was the Israeli nuclear arsenal and that country's refusal to join the NPT that stood in the way of a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. The 'nuclear weapons first' position of the Iranians, who also strongly criticized the Israeli policy of preferring regional arms control arrangements to multilateral international instruments,[203] was similar to the one advanced by Egypt in the course of the ACRS discussions: the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East was a prerequisite for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. (Feldman 1997: 206, 243–244; GC/39/OR.10, 1995: 14 and GC/XXXVIII/OR.10, 1994: 9)

Calls for the establishment of a NWFZ and, more broadly, of a WMDFZ in the Middle East were another common theme of Iran's and Egypt's arms control operations. Whereas the Iranians had always guarded the idea of the creation of a NWFZ in the region – officially presented by the Shah administration in 1974 – as their own, the proposal for the creation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East became internationally known as the Mubarak initiative, named after the Egyptian president. The Mubarak initiative was launched on 8 April 1990 and contained three core points. First, it demanded that the possession of all kinds of WMD should be prohibited in the Middle East. Secondly, the initiative called on the regional states to make equal and reciprocal commitments in the area of WMD disarmament. Thirdly, the initiative called for the establishment of verification measures and modalities to ascertain the regional states' full compliance with the WMD prohibition. (Feldman 1997: 226, 297–298)

While supporting the transformation of the Middle East into a zone free of nuclear, chemical, and biological armaments, the Islamic Republic did not, as pointed out by Chubin (1994: 98), refer to the WMDFZ initiative as an Egyptian proposal. Iran's reluctance to diplomatically credit Egypt stemmed, among others, from the fact that the Islamic Republic had spoken of a WMD-free Middle East already before the official introduction of the Mubarak initiative. During the Iran–Iraq war, Iranian officials had raised the idea of a CWFZ in the Middle East,[204] and after the war, in 1989, they had made their first references to a Middle Eastern WMDFZ.[205] The Islamic Republic's unwillingness to identify itself with a proposal depicted by Egyptian authorities as a diplomatic concession and as a friendly gesture to Israel was another reason for Iran's

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[203] Israeli authorities' suspicious attitude towards international arms control instruments stems mainly from the belief that the verification mechanisms of those arrangements are too weak and, hence, leave room for cheating (ibid.: 244).
[204] See above section 4.1.1.2 and section 4.1.1.3 (footnote 55).
[205] See above section 4.1.2.1.

reluctance to make allusions to a diplomatic initiative identified with the president of Egypt.[206]

Be that as it may, the Iranians nonetheless promoted the idea of a WMDFZ in the Middle East, lent their support to Egypt's and other Arab countries' efforts in the matter,[207] and expressed their readiness to consider any "constructive, comprehensive and non-discriminatory" proposal for the establishment of a NWFZ or a WMDFZ in the Middle East or any other part of the world.[208] Thus, for example, the Islamic Republic restated its support for the NWFZ in the South Pacific[209] and in the Latin America and the Caribbean,[210] respectively, and called for the creation of a corresponding zone in South Asia.[211] Moreover, Iran expressed particular satisfaction with South Africa's joining of the NPT in July 1991 and with the revelations made by South Africa in March 1993 regarding the details of its nuclear weapons program, which cleared the way for the creation of a NWFZ in Africa.[212] The Treaty of Pelindaba establishing the African nuclear-weapon-free zone was opened for signature on 11 April 1996.

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[206] Egyptian officials stressed that while addressing the issue of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, the Mubarak initiative simultaneously recognized Israel's concerns over chemical and biological capabilities in the region. As such, then, the Egyptians argued, the initiative aimed at building confidence between the Arabs and the Israelis. (Feldman 1997: 226, 240). Cohen (2002: 196–197) sees the Mubarak initiative essentially as a diplomatic effort to support the Egyptian argument that as long as Israel possesses nuclear weapons, it is legitimate for Arab countries not to join international instruments banning chemical and biological weapons.

[207] Following the initiation of the Mubarak initiative in April 1991, Iran started to make fewer references to the creation of a NWFZ in the Middle East and spoke more broadly of the need for a regional WMDFZ. Even if not crediting Egypt for diplomatic initiative, Iran did recognize that Egypt was a key advocate of the idea of a WMDFZ in the Middle East. Note, for example, the following Iranian statement from 1995: "Iran has continuously supported the nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East and now stands with Egypt on the question of the Middle East as a zone free from weapons of mass destruction" (Zarif 1995: 129).

[208] See A/47/PV.5 (1992: 51); A/C.1/47/PV.5 (1992: 57) and A/49/PV.73 (1994: 19).

[209] See NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18 (1995: 372).

[210] See A/C.1/48/SR.13 (1993: 9) and NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18 (1995: 372).

[211] See A/C.1/44/PV.13 (1989: 11) and Mashhadi (1995: 81–82). While the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia, which would necessitate the nuclear disarmament of both India and Pakistan, continued to remain a distant goal, on 15 December 1995, the countries of South-East Asia signed a multilateral instrument known as the Treaty of Bangkok which created a NWFZ in the region. For the details of the Treaty of Bangkok, which entered into force in March 1997, see Tulliu and Schmalberger (2001: 89–90). It should be further noted here that Iranian authorities also supported the idea of a permanently nuclear-free Central Asia (Mashhadi 1995: 81–82 and Roshandel 1996b: 56).

[212] See GC/XXXVII/OR.362 (1993: 7); GC/39/OR.3 (1995: 21) and A/C.1/50/PV.11 (1995: 11). After the end of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic had continued to accuse South Africa and Israel of extensive collaboration in the nuclear field and to call for the adoption of international measures putting an end to Israeli-South African nuclear cooperation (A/CN.10/PV.146, 1990: 59; NPT/CONF.IV/MC.III/SR.5, 1990: 392 and NPT/CONF.IV/MC.I/SR.6, 1990: 276). Subsequently, Iranians officials lauded South Africa's decision to terminate its nuclear weapons program and maintained that the decision would "further isolate the usurper Israeli regime as a nuclear threat blatantly ignoring all international means of control and verification" (GC/XXXV/OR.334, 1991: 28).

In the view of the Islamic Republic, zones free of nuclear armaments and other WMD constituted an important step towards complete WMD disarmament.[213] As far as the Middle East was concerned, Iranian authorities named three specific threats that necessitated the establishment of a Middle Eastern WMDFZ. Most importantly, they said, such a zone was needed to eliminate the threat posed by Israel's nuclear armaments.[214] In addition, the Iranians argued that a Middle Eastern WMDFZ would prevent the other regional countries from acquiring nuclear arms[215] as well as provide a solution to the problem of chemical and biological weapons in the Middle East (A/C.1/46/PV.5, 1991: 36–37; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 15 and Zarif 1995: 120).

In practical terms, then, Iranian officials believed that a WMDFZ in the Middle East would serve a dual purpose for their country: it would simultaneously address the Israeli nuclear threat as well as the issue of Arab WMD. As before, however, the Iranians did not elaborate on the modalities of a Middle Eastern NWFZ or WMDFZ.[216] Still, Israel's commitment to give up its nuclear weapons was declared by the Islamic Republic as the essential first step in the process towards a WMD-free Middle East. After a decision taken by Israel to join the NPT and to subject its nuclear facilities to IAEA full-scope safeguards, Iranian authorities envisaged, Arab governments would follow suit by giving up their chemical and biological capabilities. A WMDFZ in the region would then be in place.[217] (CD/PV.625, 1992: 6; CD/PV.690, 1994: 12 and A/C.1/50/PV.11, 1995: 13)

While putting the onus in the matter on Israel, Iranian authorities accused Western governments and especially the United States of supporting Israel's stance in the zone debate. As long as Western powers refrained from pressuring Israel to make the nuclear concession, the Iranian argument went, a WMD-free Middle East would remain a

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[213] See A/45/PV.5 (1990: 48–49); A/CN.10/PV.165 (1992: 51) and A/48/PV.14 (1993: 23).

[214] See A/C.1/46, PV.5 (1991: 36–37); A/47/PV.79 (1992: 73) and A/48/PV.68 (1993: 17). The Iranians stated that, in their opinion, the creation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East was the "most desirable and attainable" way of neutralizing the threat posed by Israel's nuclear weapons (Roshandel 1996b: 58).

[215] The Islamic Republic argued that the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East would "contribute enormously to filling the gap caused by the absence of a collective security system" among the Islamic countries of the Middle East (A/C.1/45/PV.35, 1990: 21).

[216] Of course, the dim prospects for the realization of such zones did not necessarily warrant detailed formulations on the part of the Iranians.

[217] The Islamic Republic strongly criticized Israel's approach to the idea of a Middle Eastern NWFZ or WMDFZ. By linking the creation of such zones to prior establishment of a "so-called peace" in the Middle East, the Iranians argued, Israel fuelled arms racing in the Middle East, "violated the principle of non-proliferation," and "encouraged policies of threat and blackmail in international relations"

distant goal. As to extra-regional states' role in the diplomatic deliberations on a Middle Eastern NWFZ or WMDFZ, the representatives of the Islamic Republic called on NWS to back the regional countries' zone efforts and to declare that they would respect the non-nuclear status of a nuclear- or WMD-free Middle East by promising not to use or threaten to use nuclear armaments against the zonal states. Similarly, Iran demanded that nuclear supplier countries should make promises of increased cooperation with the Middle Eastern zone countries in the nuclear field. (GC/XXXVII/OR.354, 1993: 28; NPT/CONF.1995/MC.II/WP.18, 1995: 372 and Mashhadi 1995: 86–87)

Even though actively promoting the idea of a WMDFZ covering the entire Middle East, Iranian authorities simultaneously called for the creation of a similar zone in a more limited context, that is, in the Persian Gulf sub-region. Following the end of the Iran–Iraq war, references to a WMD-free Gulf region became an integral part of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation,[218] and as before, they were linked to Iranian officials' discussion of the objective of an indigenous Gulf security system. Pointing to the proposal put forth by their government in 1986 regarding the establishment of a collective security arrangement in the Gulf,[219] the representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained that the implementation of Iran's 1986 initiative would help the Gulf states to address the threat of WMD as well as the problem of foreign military presence in the region, two key factors that stood in the way of the Persian Gulf region's long-term security and tranquility.[220] (A/C.1/45/PV.46, 1990: 27 –30; A/50/PV.5, 1995: 26 and Zarif 1995: 122–123)

In spite of the emphasis it put on the objective of ridding the Persian Gulf region of all kinds of WMD, Iran's Gulf argumentation also treated nuclear weapons as an independent issue and called on the regional states to take steps in the area of nuclear disarmament. As the long-term nuclear disarmament objective, the Islamic Republic

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(GC/40/OR.2, 1996: 9–10). For a discussion of Israel's view of an acceptable NWFZ or WMDFZ in the Middle East, see Feldman (1997: 249–254).

[218] For Iranian calls for the creation of a WMDFZ in the Gulf, see CD/PV.690 (1994: 13); *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* (1994: 15); and Zarif (1995: 120).

[219] See above section 3.3.4.

[220] Moreover, the Iranians pointed out that the concept of a defensive security scheme, introduced by the Islamic Republic in 1994, also emphasized the importance of a WMD-free Persian Gulf (see above sections 3.7.1, 3.7.2.1 and 5.2.1.1). One of the reasons the officials of the Islamic Republic gave for their strong opposition to foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf was that the major powers were stationing more and more of their nuclear armaments at sea. As a coastal state, the Iranians said, their country viewed the major powers' navies as a constant security threat. (A/C.1/43/PV.15, 1988: 58; A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 13 and A/C.1/45/PV.6, 1990: 41). Iran pointed to the concern over the major powers' naval capabilities also when voicing its support for the effectively obsolete Indian Ocean Zone of

pointed to the establishment of a Gulf NWFZ that would simultaneously constitute a key component of the Iranian-visioned new regional security architecture. Pending the creation of such a NWFZ, Iranian officials proposed, all the regional countries should restate their rejection of nuclear armaments and those Gulf states that had not yet acceded to the NPT should promptly do so.[221] Moreover, the Islamic Republic called on the Gulf countries to exchange views on the NPT and IAEA safeguards. Iranian representatives referred to "coordinated regional implementation" of IAEA safeguards and raised the possibility of complementary verification mechanisms created by the Gulf states themselves. In addition, the Iranians called for regional cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and expressed the Islamic Republic's readiness to consider "any other positive initiative" dealing with nuclear matters in the Gulf context.[222] (CD/PV.659, 1993: 9; *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 19 and CD/PV.690, 1994: 13)

5.3 From the CTBT to the Iranian Signature of the IAEA Additional Protocol

5.3.1 The Khatami administration and nuclear disarmament

5.3.1.1 The ideological premises

By the time of Muhammad Khatami's rise to the Iranian presidency in 1997, post-Pahlavi Iran had formulated and explicated its positions on the issues that dominated international deliberations on nuclear disarmament. Under the new Khatami administration, Iranian officials continued to rely on those stances. In terms of substance, then, the Khatami government's argumentation on nuclear disarmament did not basically differ from that of the preceding Rafsanjani administration.

Despite the continuity in Iran's nuclear arms control operations, however, the distinct political language adopted and subsequently refined by the representatives of the

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Peace initiative (A/C.1/44/PV.13, 1989: 12–13; A/C.1/47/PV.5, 1992: 46 and A/C.1/50/PV.11, 1995: 12–13).

[221] Iran's NPT accession call was effectively directed at the United Arab Emirates and Oman which did not accede to the NPT until in September 1995 and January 1997, respectively. Iraq had joined the treaty already in 1969, Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain in 1988, and Kuwait and Qatar in 1989.

[222] It should be noted that Iran alluded to the UN as the extra-regional actor that could help the Gulf countries in their joint nuclear disarmament efforts. References to the potential supporting role of the UN were also present in the Iranian argumentation on the creation of a WMDFZ in the Persian Gulf as well as

Khatami administration brought a new dimension to the Islamic Republic's nuclear diplomacy. The concepts and ideas presented by the Khatami government signalled Iran's desire to mend its fences with the rest of the world, and they also provided a new ideological framework within which the Iranians explained and promoted their positions on individual nuclear-related issues, whether or not those stances had already been part and parcel of Iran's arms control operations throughout the Islamic Republic's brief history.

Accordingly, Iran's strong opposition to nuclear weapons was now characterized by the Iranians as a natural manifestation of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy which aimed for the realization of a world, a "global civil society," that would meet the spiritual and material needs of humanity. Iranian officials defined security as one of such needs and maintained that the prevalent international security paradigm, based on zero-sum thinking in which one country's security could be enhanced only at the expense of others', was not capable of providing security for all nations. On the contrary, the Iranians claimed, states' constant quest for power increased insecurity in the world and fuelled coercion and cultural domination in international relations. The existence of nuclear weapons, widely regarded as a source of national power, the officials of the Islamic Republic emphasized, made the existing reality all the more dangerous. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 23–24; Zarif 2002a and CD/PV.783, 1998: 11)

The Iranians argued that the transformation of international relations was an urgent necessity not only because the current international system was incapable of ensuring the security of all nations. New conditions were also needed because states' focus on the concept of power was preventing them from finding solutions to contemporary security challenges that required cooperation and multilaterally formulated responses, and because, as president Khatami himself put it in September 2000, "the world community ultimately requires the emergence of a responsive moral society, precluding resort to force and coercion both in national and international disputes." (CD/PV.812, 1999: 2; Khatami 2000 and Zarif 2002a)

What kind of an international order the Khatami administration was then calling for? According to Iranian officials, a global civil society would have two basic characteristics. On the one hand, it would be based on the rule of law. Interaction between states would be guided by the "power of law" and not by the "law of power."

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in the Islamic Republic's discussion of the Gulf security system. (CD/PV.690, 1994: 14; Zarif 1995: 123 and *The Islamic Republic of Iran and Disarmament* 1994: 17–19)

On the other hand, the Iranians described, the laws and principles in a global civil society would be formulated on a multilateral basis, in a way that each and every country would have the right to participate in all stages of international decision-making and policy implementation. In the Iranian-envisioned international order, unilateralism and political expediency would have no place because, as underscored by the Iranians, the world belonged to all its inhabitants. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 23–24; CD/PV.783, 1998: 12 and Khatami 2000)

As far as the subject of security was concerned, the members of the Khatami administration pointed out that in a transformed international system, states would accept the premise that all peoples and states have an equal right to survive and to guarantee peace and security for their citizens. The recognition of the fact that security is ”global and indivisible,” the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out, would preserve and ensure the national security of each member of the international community. In a global civil society, the Iranians added, states would cooperate in security matters and focus on the ”global common interest” instead of their narrow national objectives. (Danesh-Yazdi 1999; Zarif 2002a and CD/PV.900, 2002: 8, 12)

The representatives of the Khatami administration acknowledged that the transition from the old international order to the Iranian-envisioned global civil society would take time and face major obstacles. Nonetheless, they insisted that the international community should immediately start to take steps that would facilitate such a transition. Iranian officials pointed to ”dialogue among civilizations,” the Khatami administration’s key diplomatic catchword, as a means with the help of which states could gradually adopt a ”new paradigm of inclusion and reform in international relations” and move towards the realization of a global civil society. And through ”global security networking,” defined by the Iranians as dialogue among civilizations in the context of international security deliberations, states would be able to create peaceful and secure conditions for all nations. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 23; Khatami 2000 and Kharrazi 2002b)

According to the Khatami administration, the central objective of dialogue among civilizations and global security networking was to free the world from WMD and from nuclear weapons, in particular. In the Iranian opinion, nuclear weapons undermined the fundamental principle that all nations have an equal right to survive and inhibited confidence-building between states. Today, the representatives of the Islamic Republic declared, nuclear weapons served no other role than ”to antagonize and to invite tension

and conflict:" they were instruments of intimidation and terror. Iranian officials categorically rejected the thesis that the acquisition of nuclear armaments increased states' national security.[223] Moreover, they strongly criticized military doctrines that gave a role to nuclear weapons. Concepts and doctrines belonging to the realm of nuclear strategy, such as nuclear deterrence and the balance of terror, the Iranians argued, rested on theoretically questionable foundations and were "historically unsound."[224] (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 11; A/CN.10/PV.227, 1999: 3 and CD/PV.812, 1999: 3, 6)

Thus, the elimination of nuclear weapons was declared by the Khatami administration as a precondition for confidence-building between states and for the realization of a global civil society. The Islamic Republic vowed its commitment to nuclear disarmament and to the ultimate objective of a transformed world order. In its opinion, it was no longer either acceptable or practical to divide the international community into two groups: those "living behind the walls of fortresses of alliances and WMD" and those whose security concerns were completely neglected. The Iranians called for intensified international efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament and stressed that the elimination of nuclear weapons was the international community's highest arms control priority. (A/52/PV.6, 1997: 23–24; CD/PV.812, 1999: 3 and A/CN.10/PV.227, 1999: 3)

5.3.1.2 Iran and the nuclear non-proliferation regime

As already noted, at the practical diplomatic level, beneath ideological deliberations, the Khatami administration's approach to nuclear disarmament followed a familiar Iranian course.[225] The officials of the Islamic Republic thus continued to tirelessly call on nuclear powers to end their reliance on nuclear weapons – armaments which, in the words of Iran and its NAM allies, posed "the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of the civilization" (NPT/CONF.2000/18, 2000: 344) – and to give up their

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[223] As argued by Iran`s representative at the CD in June 1998, the belief that the acquisition of nuclear weapons increased security or national clout was simply a misperception (CD/PV.798, 1998).

[224] Iranian officials warned that "the challenge of the 21st century is not just loose nukes, not even nukes per se; the challenge is the mentality that believes any country whatsoever still needs nukes or can justify them or claim that they are safe in their arsenal" (CD/PV.812, 1999: 6).

[225] Due to the substantive continuity in the Islamic Republic's nuclear diplomacy, the subsequent discussion on Iran's nuclear arms control operations will go into details only insofar as the Khatami administration has modified the content of the Islamic Republic's traditional argumentation or

nuclear arsenals.[226] Iran repeatedly called for immediate disarmament steps both on the bilateral U.S.–Russian track[227] as well as on the multilateral diplomatic track. The grand Iranian objective was the conclusion, within a time-bound framework, of a universal Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) "prohibiting the development, production, testing, employment, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination" (Dehghani 1999a).[228]

Recognizing that the elimination of nuclear weapons remained a distant scenario, the Khatami administration supported and endorsed partial diplomatic moves towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Simultaneously, it called for international measures that would enhance non-nuclear states' security against the threat of nuclear weapons. As one potential measure, the Iranians alluded to the idea to ban the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances. Using the 1925 Geneva Protocol as a model, they called for the creation of a special protocol, to be added to the NPT, for the purpose. But cognizant of the nuclear powers' strong opposition to the long-lived idea of a ban on the use of nuclear weapons – which stemmed from the simple fact that a non-use agreement would effectively equal to nuclear disarmament –, the Islamic Republic also called, more modestly, for the establishment, preferably within the NPT framework, of an international instrument that would provide NNWS

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developments in Iran's political and military environment have warranted diplomatic responses to changed circumstances.

[226] As before, the Islamic Republic criticized NWS for their efforts to qualitatively develop their nuclear arsenals and for the centrality of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines which, to the dismay of the Iranians, included war plans against non-nuclear threats (Kharrazi 2000b; CD/PV.798, 1998: 2 and Nejad-Hosseinian 2001). In 1999, for example, Iranian authorities expressed their concern over the reluctance of NATO, at its 50th anniversary summit, to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its strategic posture (Dehghani 1999a and A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 28). Similarly, Russia's new military doctrine, made public in 1999 – the doctrine provided, among others, for the use of nuclear armaments in response to enemy use of conventional weapons – raised worries in Tehran (Sokov 1999 and Vaezi and Saghafi-Ameri 2000: 418).

[227] While of the view that bilateral nuclear arms control between the United States and Russia was progressing far too slowly, Iran did express its satisfaction over the positive developments in the bilateral negotiations. For example, the Islamic Republic welcomed the ratification of START II by the Russian Duma in April 2000 – the U.S. Senate had ratified the treaty in January 1996 – and called on the parties to quickly begin negotiations on a START III treaty (Kharrazi 2000b and NPT/CONF.2000/18, 2000: 344).

[228] As far as multilateral nuclear disarmament discussions were concerned, Iranian officials spoke of the need to improve the efficiency of the existing diplomatic processes. Hence, the Islamic Republic strongly welcomed the strengthening of the review process for the NPT – agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference – and started to actively participate in the work of the NPT Preparatory Committee which holds a meeting in each of the three years prior to the subsequent NPT review conference. Together with other NAM countries, Iran also called for the establishment of an "open-ended standing committee" that would work intersessionally to follow up the recommendations made by NPT review conferences on the treaty's implementation. (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 19–20; NPT/CONF.2000/18, 2000: 341 and NPT/CONF.2000/SR.16, 2000: 4). In regards to the Iranian-promoted NWC, the Islamic Republic named the CD as the only acceptable venue for the treaty negotiations (A/C.1/53/PV.28, 1998: 4).

with negative security assurances. (A/CN.10/PV.222, 1998: 17; Goldblat 1994: 198, 200 and Kharrazi 2000b)

Moreover, under president Khatami, Iran continued to call on nuclear powers to provide information about their nuclear armaments. Nuclear transparency, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed, would alleviate non-nuclear states' security concerns and constitute an important step towards nuclear disarmament. Iran regularly called for the expansion of the UN arms register's scope to cover WMD and was of the opinion that nuclear powers should provide detailed information not only about the quantitative and qualitative features of their nuclear arsenals and fissile materials, but also about their nuclear delivery systems, their plans to develop their nuclear capabilities, as well as about their nuclear warhead dismantlement activities. Nuclear powers' resistance to the expansion of the UN register's scope, Iranian representatives claimed, severely hampered the register's effective and successful operation. (CD/PV.798, 1998: 2; A/C.1/53/PV.24, 1998: 4 and Zarif 2002a)

The Islamic Republic also continued to express its support for an international treaty that would specifically deal with fissile materials. The Khatami administration welcomed the decision taken by the CD in August 1998 to establish an ad hoc committee for the purpose and to start negotiations on banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. With treaty talks in mind, Iranian officials repeated their government's core negotiation position according to which a fissile material treaty should concern both the future and the past production of those materials. However, as, in the end, the CD never managed to agree on a work plan for the negotiations, the diplomatic process in Geneva came quickly to a standstill. Thus, even though Iran was among the states calling for the early commencement of the treaty negotiations, the issue of fissile materials turned into a secondary subject in its nuclear arms control operations. (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 12; CD/PV.912, 2002: 23 and A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 28)

The opposite was true for the Islamic Republic's argumentation on nuclear testing. In the course of its first year in office, the Khatami administration witnessed a series of nuclear tests in Iran's immediate neighbourhood. Despite the fact the nuclear explosions carried out by India and Pakistan in May 1998 prompted immediate international condemnation, the Islamic Republic's initial reaction to them was somewhat

ambiguous.[229] After India's tests of 11 and 13 May, Iran expressed its serious concern over the explosions and stressed that they were against the general objective of nuclear disarmament. More specifically, Iran characterized the Indian tests as a move that eroded the nuclear non-proliferation regime and especially the recently concluded CTBT. In the Iranian view, India's tests had illustrated that there was an urgent need for a NWFZ in South Asia. (CD/PV.792, 1998: 31)

After Pakistan responded to India's nuclear explosions by carrying out its own tests on 28 and 30 May, however, the Islamic Republic seemed to be willing to sacrifice its diplomatic consistency to ideological considerations. For a while, Iran brushed its long-lived diplomatic opposition to nuclear weapons aside and, instead, subscribed to the logic of nuclear deterrence which its officials had so consistently spoken against in the past. Thus, at first, under the lead of foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi, the Islamic Republic praised Pakistan for its nuclear tests and argued that Muslims throughout the world welcomed the fact that there was an Islamic country capable of making nuclear weapons. In particular, the Iranians maintained, Muslims were happy about the fact that Pakistan's nuclear capability now provided them with a counterweight and protection against Israel and its nuclear arsenal. (Cordesman 1999a: 266 and Farhi 2001: 42)

Yet, Iran's flirtation with the notion of an 'Islamic bomb' – that is, a nuclear weapon viewed as collectively belonging to the whole of the Islamic community – proved short-lived. After the initial, ideological Iranian reaction, the Islamic Republic reverted to its old diplomatic course and expressed deep concern over Pakistan's nuclear explosions. Although Iranian authorities noted that the advances made in the nuclear field by India and Pakistan had not come as a surprise to them,[230] they pointed out that a nuclear arms race in Iran's neighbourhood would have major security implications for their country.

According to the Islamic Republic's foreign minister, the decisions taken by India and Pakistan to reveal their nuclear capabilities to the whole world were a "giant mistake" that pushed the regions of South Asia and the Middle East to a situation of heightened alert and tension. In addition to pointing to the tests' adverse effects on regional status quo and stability, Iranian representatives argued that by fuelling nuclear

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[229] For the details regarding the tests and for the reasons that led India and Pakistan to conduct the explosions, see Synnott (1999: 11–26).

[230] Iran stated after the May 1998 explosions that the nuclear capability of India or Pakistan – both of which were widely believed at the time to be in possession of nuclear weapons or, at least, to possess an ability to quickly produce them – had "never been a secret" (CD/PV.796, 1998: 2). That the nuclear tests of 1998 in South Asia did not fundamentally alter Iran's threat perceptions with respect to India and

proliferation and rivalry in international relations, the events in South Asia constituted a major danger to international peace and security as well. Moreover, the officials of the Islamic Republic emphasized that the developments in South Asia had badly damaged the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including that of the CTBT, as well as posed a threat to the natural environment.[231] (CD/PV.796, 1998: 1–2; CD/PV.795, 1998: 8–9 and GC/42/OR.3, 1998: 21)

Following the May 1998 explosions, governments throughout the world expressed their regret and concern over the situation in South Asia. In the end, however, only certain industrialized countries, mainly the United States and Japan, went beyond their verbal condemnations and took concrete sanction measures against India and Pakistan.[232] While noting that the nuclear tests had been a "misconduct" and that India and Pakistan would have to face the consequences of their actions, Iran belonged to the countries that called for a moderate international response to the matter. Instead of a heavy-handed approach, the representatives of the Islamic Republic recommended, the international community should focus on preventing further escalation of the crisis in South Asia and on helping the two parties to defuse the tensions between them. (Synnott 1999: 27–29; CD/PV.796, 1998: 2 and Kharrazi 1998d)

As far as its own diplomacy was concerned, soon after the nuclear tests in South Asia had ended the Islamic Republic sent a delegation, headed by foreign minister Kharrazi, to both India and Pakistan. In its consultations with Indian and Pakistani governments, as well as in subsequent diplomatic statements, Iran called on the two countries to cease their nuclear testing and to refrain from acts that might aggrevate the situation in the region. Also, Iranian officials underscored the urgency of a comprehensive Indian–Pakistani dialogue that would center around two sets of issues: the key political problems between the two states and nuclear matters. Moreover, the Islamic Republic called on Indian and Pakistani governments to implement mutual confidence-building measures as well as to ensure that no nuclear weapons-related material, equipment or technology would be exported out of their respective territories. Finally, Iran called on the two countries to expeditiously accede both to the NPT and the CTBT. (CD/PV.796, 1998: 1–3 and Kharrazi 1998d)

Pakistan might partly explain why the Islamic Republic used the immediate aftermath of the Pakistani tests to show off its ideological credentials.

[231] It should be noted that Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests at an underground test site in the Baluchistan region, only some 30 kilometers from the Iranian border (Farhi 2001: 39).

[232] For details about international responses to the South Asian nuclear tests, see Synnott (1999: 27–37).

One of the features of Iran's diplomacy in this context was the Islamic Republic's reluctance to discuss the Indian–Pakistani political disputes that had contributed to the May 1998 events in the first place. Instead, after having initially 'Islamized' the test issue, the Iranians internationalized it by accusing NWS of being partly responsible for the nuclear crisis in South Asia. According to the Iranian interpretation, the nuclear powers' continuous unwillingness to take meaningful steps towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament, together with their disregard for the views and interests of NNWS, had prompted India and Pakistan to conclude that they needed nuclear weapon capabilities to guarantee their national security. (CD/PV.796, 1998: 1–2; Nejad-Hosseinian 1998 and A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 11)

The representatives of the Islamic Republic also claimed that the events in South Asia had demonstrated that the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime was not capable of removing the threat of nuclear weapons.[233] To emphasize this point, and to take advantage of the international debate on the Indian–Pakistani tests for the promotion of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic objectives, the Iranians called for the establishment of NWFZ in South Asia and the Middle East.[234] Furthermore, by pointing specifically to the case of Israel, Iranian officials called on the international community to secure the universality of the NPT,[235] in addition to which they maintained that the removal of extra-NPT export controls would facilitate the accession of non-parties to the NPT.[236] Ultimately, however, Iranians officials declared that the threat of nuclear weapons could be eliminated only through total nuclear disarmament.[237]

The developments in South Asia aside, the Khatami administration stressed that in spite of the serious built-in shortcomings of the CTBT, the Islamic Republic continued to support the treaty[238] and the efforts aimed at establishing an international organization for its implementation.[239] The Iranians emphasized the importance of the CTBT's universality and called on the 44 states whose accession to the instrument is

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[233] As stated by the Islamic Republic at the UN, the nuclear tests in South Asia had "revealed that the existing non-proliferation regime can no longer serve as the sole basis for guaranteeing a safe future for a world free from the fear of nuclear threat" (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 11).

[234] See CD/PV.795 (1998: 8–9); CD/PV.798 (1998: 1) and Farhi (2001: 42).

[235] See CD/PV.796 (1998: 3) and Kharrazi (1998d).

[236] See ibid.

[237] In the Iranian view, the temptation and quest by some countries to acquire nuclear armaments would survive as long as states failed to "forge a new approach to security and particularly complete nuclear disarmament" (CD/PV.812, 1999: 2–3).

[238] See CD/PV.792 (1998: 32); A/C.1/54/PV.25 (1999: 7) and Hosseini (2003: 2).

[239] For Iran's support for the Vienna-based Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, established in November 1996, see A/C.1/52/PV.11 (1997: 19) and Hosseini (2003: 2).

necessary for its entry into force to finish their national ratification processes as soon as possible.[240] (GC/41/OR.2, 1997: 12; A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 12 and NPT/CONF.2000/18, 2000: 343)

However, the Islamic Republic's calls for the CTBT's early entry into force suffered a major blow as a result of the decision made by the U.S. Senate in October 1999 not to ratify the treaty.[241] Iran strongly criticized the Senate's rejection of the CTBT and defined it as a major setback for international nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Also, Iranian officials warned that the U.S. decision could have a negative impact on the on-going ratification processes in other countries. For this reason, the representatives of the Islamic Republic demanded, the international community should express its concern over U.S. disregard of the test-ban treaty and call on the Americans to reverse their October 1999 decision.[242] (A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 28; A/C.1/54/PV.25, 1999: 7 and NPT/CONF.2000/18, 2000: 344)

Iran intensified its criticism of the United States' CTBT policy after the administration of George W. Bush had taken office in Washington in January 2001. According to Iranian officials, the Bush administration's declaration that it did not support the test-ban treaty and would not ask the Senate to reconsider approving the instrument testified to the U.S. administration's "dangerous mentality," "unipolar vision of the world," and its policy of "unilateralism."[243]

Another source of concern for the Iranians was the Bush government's classified Nuclear Posture Review that was prepared by the U.S. Department of Defense and publicly summarized by Pentagon officials in January 2002.[244] In addition to generally

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[240] The CTBT will enter into force 180 days after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by the following 44 states listed in the treaty's Annex 2: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Republic of Korea, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Vietnam, and Zaire. The list consists of countries that are members of the CD and in possession of nuclear power and/or research reactors.

[241] The Senate decision to reject the CTBT mainly based on concerns over the CTBT's effect on the safety, security, reliability, and credibility of the American nuclear stockpile. Also, the members of the Senate were not convinced, for example, that the treaty could substantially stop nuclear proliferation and that the states parties' compliance could be verified in a satisfactory manner. (Cambone 2000: 209–211, 214–215)

[242] As pointed out by one representative of the Islamic Republic, the U.S. approach to the CTBT was another indication of the policy of double standard that "makes the credibility of U.S. policy questionable in the eyes of the Iranians" (*IRNA*, 18 March 2000).

[243] See Soltanieh (2001d: 1); Kharrazi (2002b) and Kharrazi (2002c). For the Bush administration's views of the CTBT, see *Arms Control Today* (December 2001) and Steinberg and Etengoff (2002: 51).

[244] The first newspaper to get hold of the document was *The Los Angeles Times* which began to report on it on 9 March 2002 (*Arms Control Today*, April 2002).

characterizing the review as a highly alarming document,[245] the officials of the Islamic Republic also discussed it from the standpoint of the CTBT. In the Iranian analysis, the Bush administration's posture document – which stated, among others, that nuclear weapons provided credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military force, and that nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack, such as deep underground bunkers and biological weapons facilities – expanded nuclear weapons' role in the U.S. military doctrine to the extent that the Americans would have to test new nuclear-weapon systems and thus violate the legal obligations stemming from their signature of the CTBT in September 1996 and from the unilateral U.S. nuclear test moratorium declared in October 1992. (*Arms Control Today*, April 2002; Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a and Hosseini 2003: 2)

Iran expressed its categorical opposition to any kind of development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons – including the potential construction by the United States of so-called small or mini-nuclear weapons capable of penetrating earth and destroying military targets in hardened and deeply buried bunkers[246] – and repeatedly called on the Americans to ratify the CTBT. In the end, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic openly recognized that their calls would have very little, if any, effect on the Bush administration's policy on nuclear testing. As concluded by one Iranian representative in March 2002: "The rejection of the CTBT by a major nuclear-weapon State has blown hopes for its rapid entry into force and there does not seem to be any room for optimism towards a change of policy from that side." (Hosseini 2003; Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a and CD/PV.900, 2002: 9)

Iran's criticism of the Bush administration's policies was indicative of a more general undercurrent in the Islamic Republic's argumentation on nuclear testing, for despite its stated support for the CTBT, the Khatami administration often pointed to the treaty's defects and called for their correction. Above all, Iranian officials argued that the treaty should ban all kinds of nuclear tests, not only test explosions. Given that the scope of the CTBT had been limited to nuclear explosions, the Iranians maintained, the treaty had lost its comprehensive character and not prevented NWS from developing their

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[245] The Islamic Republic's comments on the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review of 2002, which mentions Iran as one of the seven countries against whom the United States should be prepared to use nuclear weapons, will be discussed in greater detail below in the present chapter.
[246] For the issue of mini-nuclear weapons, see Ferguson (2002).

nuclear stockpiles and producing new and more complex types of nuclear armaments through non-explosive tests. (GC/41/OR.2, 1997: 12 and A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 19)

As regards the Islamic Republic's own ratification of the CTBT, Iranian officials stated in 1997 that their country was in the process of ratifying the treaty. In October 1998, the Khatami administration declared that it intended to expedite the ratification process in the Majlis and submit Iran's instrument of ratification as soon as possible. Yet, the ratification decision continued to be deferred. Subsequently, the U.S. Senate's October 1999 declaration not to ratify the CTBT provided the authorities of the Islamic Republic with a good excuse to circumvent questions about the state of the ratification process in Iran. Accordingly, the Iranians – whose accession to the CTBT is a prerequisite for the treaty's entry into force – downplayed the relevance of their own actions in the matter and blamed the United States for all the problems pertaining to the CTBT's entry into force. (GC/41/OR.2, 1997: 13; A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 12 and Partrick 2002: 4)

At the same time, the political atmosphere within the Islamic Republic was not conducive to the treaty's smooth ratification. There were influential figures within the country's political, military, and academic circles who had serious doubts about the sense of Iranian ratification of the CTBT. These included those Iranians who, in the aftermath of the Indian–Pakistani nuclear tests of May 1998, increasingly questioned the adequacy of the Islamic Republic's military resources and openly flirted with the idea of a national nuclear weapons capability.[247] From their perspective, Iran's accession to yet another multilateral disarmament arrangement would be a mistake and an aberration from the real issue, namely, the need to seriously consider the possibility of a national nuclear weapons program. Iran's accession to the CTBT was objected to also on purely tactical political grounds. The view that Iran should use the CTBT ratification as a diplomatic trump card rested on the belief that the ratification issue could be manipulated to increase the Islamic Republic's regional and international bargaining power. (Partrick 2002: 4; Farhi 2001: 39–41, 48 and Farhi 2004: 34–35)

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[247] The supporters of an Iranian nuclear weapons program justified their views, among others, by maintaining that Iran needed such weapons to have a deterrent against the WMD-armed states in its neighbourhood – that is, Iraq, Pakistan, India and Israel – as well as against the United States. Those advocating an Iranian military nuclear program further viewed nuclear armaments as a means to enhance the Islamic Republic's international status and influence. Some analysts have argued that Pakistan's nuclear tests of May 1998 constituted a major blow to Iranian authorities' national pride, for they had always viewed Pakistan as a culturally and historically inferior neighbour. (Farhi 2001: 35–36, 41; Farhi 2004: 35 and Perkovich 2003a: 4–5)

But even without such domestic intra-elite Iranian considerations, the U.S. reluctance to ratify the CTBT provided Iran with a time-out during which it was able to refrain from further international commitments and to blame other states for their inaction. In the end, it should be remembered that the Islamic Republic had signed the CTBT only after fierce diplomatic arm wrestling and only after having declared that it considered the document's final content as unsatisfactory.

5.3.2 Iran and the control of ballistic missiles[248]

5.3.2.1 The Shihab-3 program

As the discussion in the following sections will demonstrate, the Khatami administration was forced to invest plenty of its diplomatic energies in efforts to convince the international community that the Islamic Republic's continuing interest in nuclear energy based on nothing but peaceful considerations. Related to such efforts, the Khatami administration was also forced to try to dispel the concern – existing particularly in the West and among Iran's neighbours – that the Islamic Republic's activities in the area of ballistic missiles were directly connected with Iran's WMD ambitions.[249] The inaccuracy of the ballistic missiles in the Islamic Republic's possession only strengthened the belief that they were intended as delivery vehicles for WMD and not for conventional warheads. (Kemp 2001: 2 and *Strategic Comments* 2003b: 1–2)

Prior to the Khatami era, Iranian officials had on several occasions assured that their country was only interested in short-range missiles with the reach of "a few hundred

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[248] Although the missile-related statements made by the officials of the Islamic Republic have not always exclusively dealt with ballistic missiles – that is, with unmanned rocket-driven weapons which follow a ballistic trajectory towards their designated target (Navias 1993: 3) –, the discussion below will do so. The reason is that the Islamic Republic's post-Iran–Iraq war missile control argumentation has been, first and foremost, a response to international deliberations on the topic, which, in turn, have mainly arisen from increased concern over the proliferation of ballistic missiles in the developing world. From a military point of view, ballistic missiles appear attractive to developing countries because they are capable of circumventing sophisticated air defences and delivering their payload with near certainty. The penetration capability of ballistic missiles provides developing countries with an asset with the help of which they can seek to influence the behaviour of a militarily stronger adversary. Politically, ballistic missiles are often seen as symbols of national prestige and pride. Finally, some developing countries have viewed ballistic missiles also as an export article, a potential source of much-needed foreign currency. (Sheppard 2000: 1–8)

[249] The Israeli view that a potential WMDFZ arrangement in the Middle East should incorporate ballistic missiles is one example of the way in which ballistic missiles have been seen as a component of WMD activities (Feldman 1997: 253).

kilometers" and that Iran had no program to acquire either intermediate- or long-range delivery systems.[250] This assurance was repeated by the Khatami administration in October 1997[251] only to be proved invalid some nine months later. On 22 July 1998 – at a time when the international community was closely monitoring whether the Khatami presidency would bring about changes in the Islamic Republic's armament policies –, Iran conducted its first flight test of the Shihab-3 ballistic missile which is estimated to have a range of 1,300–1,700 kilometers and be capable of carrying a 750–1,000 kilogram warhead. Shihab-3 was test-fired for the second time on 15 July 2000, and further flight tests took place at least on 23 May 2002, in July 2002, and on 7 July 2003.[252]

Iran's missile tests and the advancement of the Shihab-3 program naturally fuelled international concern over the Islamic Republic's military intentions. An accompanying worry was the question of whether the Iranians were simultaneously working on more sophisticated intermediate-range or even on long-range ballistic missiles. Iran's response to such deliberations was twofold. On the one hand, the Islamic Republic labelled the critics of Iran's missile efforts, and especially those in the United States and

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[250] See Kharrazi (1994: 127); Lotfian (1997: 202) and Arnett (1998a: 436). For the purposes of the present discussion, ballistic missiles are divided, according to their ranges, into the following categories: long-range missiles (which have ranges greater than 5,500 kilometers); intermediate-range missiles (between 5,500 and 1,000 km); and short-range missiles (less than 1,000 km) (Navias 1993: 231). It should be noted that, in lieu of such a categorization, Iranian missile statements themselves have mostly alluded to undefined "short-range" and "long-range" missiles.

[251] See Zarif (1997).

[252] See *Strategic Comments* (2003b: 1). Shihab-3 is reportedly a derivative of North Korea's Nodong-1 intermediate-range ballistic missile. Iran is believed to have been involved in North Korea's Nodong program, and some analysts assume that the Nodong and Shihab-3 programs were simultaneously established in the course of 1988 (<www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/shahab-3.htm> and Bermudez 2000: 105). As already mentioned above in section 3.3.3, North Korea was one of the key suppliers of missiles to the Islamic Republic during the Iran–Iraq war. In 1994, following the post-war deepening of the missile ties between the Islamic Republic and North Korea, the North Koreans reportedly delivered either No-dong components or a small number of completed missiles to Iran. It is believed that, subsequently, a host of quality, technical, and production problems related to the Nodong program decreased North Korean Nodong shipments to Iran, delayed the introduction of the missile into Iranian service, and slowed the start-up of Iranian Nodong production. It is also assumed that, due to the same problems, technology, components, and expertise from Russian and possibly Chinese missile programs have flown into the Islamic Republic's Shihab-3 efforts. (Bermudez 2000: 106; Katzman 2001: 15–16 and *IHT*, 12 August 2004). The number of Shihab-3 missiles in the Iranian arsenal is not known. One estimate from 2002 put the figure at ten missiles (*IHT*, 31 May 2002). In 2003, Israeli, U.S., and Russian intelligence sources estimated that Iran would be able to produce one-to-two Shihab-3s per month for the next few years. In July 2003, the Islamic Republic's supreme leader announced that the missile had been "inaugurated" into Iran's military forces. Although the exact meaning of the pronouncement remained unclear, the statement has been interpreted to indicate that the IRGC – whose air force reportedly formed five ballistic missile units in the summer of 2000 – has been equipped with Shihab-3 missiles. (*Strategic Comments* 2003b: 1–2; *IHT*, 12 August 2004 and *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 July 2000). Shihab-3 was put on display for the first time on 22 September 2000 in a parade held on the occasion of the Iran–Iraq war anniversary (Mousavi 2001: 52). For details regarding the flight tests of Shihab-3, see <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/shahab-3.htm>.

Israel, as propagandists whose aim was, by coupling Iranian missiles with WMD, to make Iran's neighbours afraid and to create a regional arms race that would benefit their interests.[253] On the other hand, and for the most part, however, the officials of the Islamic Republic concentrated on assuring the international community of the defensive and conventional nature of their missiles.

The Khatami administration repeatedly stated that the main purpose of the Shihab-3 program was to strengthen Iran's defence by bolstering its deterrent capability. Iran's missiles, the representatives of the Islamic Republic assured, would not threaten any country and would not be used in initiating acts of aggression against other states.[254] In addition, the Iranians continued, the Islamic Republic was committed to a policy of not using missiles first.[255]

While maintaining that its missiles were intended for purely defensive purposes, Iran also made it clear that it considered ballistic missiles a legitimate component of its conventional weapons arsenal, and therefore, would continue to strengthen and improve its missile capabilities.[256] One implication of the fact that the Iranians defined their ballistic missiles as conventional weapons was that their discussion of the military uses of those armaments broke away from the mainstream international discourse which placed ballistic missiles in the context of WMD. Whereas before, in WMD-related discussions, Iranian officials had consistently rejected the concepts of deterrence and the balance of power, now the very same concepts were being used to explain Iran's drive to acquire ballistic missiles.

The representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that the Iranians' efforts to deter, with the help of Shihab-3 missiles, their adversaries from launching military offences against their country was part of the Iranian objective of maintaining the

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[253] See <http://intelweb.janes.com/iwr/iv5n20501.html>. Following the first flight test of Shihab-3 in July 1998, Iranian officials stated that it was telling that Israel was the only Middle Eastern country raising concern over the test. According to the Iranians, it was Israel's own WMD and missile activities that were the real source of concern in the Middle East. (A/C.1/53/PV.5, 1998: 29)

[254] See CD/PV.806 (1998: 7); A/C.1/53/PV.11 (1998: 19) and *BBC Monitoring Middle East* (30 December 2000).

[255] See A/C.1/53/PV.5 (1998: 29); A/C.1/53/PV.11 (1998: 19) and *Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* (2000a). Reportedly, the Islamic Republic grossly violated its unilateral missile control declarations in April 2001 by launching tens of Scud-B surface-to-surface ballistic missiles at the bases of MKO in Iraq. Iranian officials defended their country's military operation by portraying it as a limited act of self-defence, permissible under article 51 of the UN Charter, against MKO's terrorist attacks on Iranian cities. For details, see Tarzi and Parliament (2001).

[256] See A/C.1/53/PV.5 (1998: 29); A/C.1/53/PV.11 (1998: 19) and A/C.1/54/PV.19 (1999: 20).

regional military balance of power.[257] The Islamic Republic's ballistic missiles, the Iranian argument went, contributed to the stability of the Middle East by preventing regional actors from underestimating Iran's military power and challenging its position in the regional security equation. Iranian officials referred to the Iraqi decisions to invade Iran in September 1980 and Kuwait in August 1990 as prime examples of miscalculated efforts to alter the regional balance of power and of the disastrous ramifications of such endeavors.[258]

Even though the Islamic Republic's interest in ballistic missiles can largely be explained by the Iranians' experiences with the Iraqi missile use during the Iran–Iraq war,[259] Saddam Hussein's Iraq was not the only threat the Islamic Republic's missile arsenal was supposed to deter. In fact, in Iranian officials' argumentation, the threat of Israeli conventional or WMD strikes against the Islamic Republic served as a key justification for Iran's Shihab-3 program.[260] The efforts by the United States to undermine the Islamic Republic's security, together with Iran's security concerns over Turkey and the nuclear-armed Pakistan and India, were among other stated military motives for Iran's missile research and development activities. (*Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* 2000a; Steinberg and Etengoff 2002: 21 and *BBC World*, 27 November 2000)

Apart from security considerations, Iranian authorities maintained that they were investing in missile technology also because it offered enormous civilian applications in

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[257] According to Ali Shamkhani, the Islamic Republic's defence minister, Iran's armament policies focused on weapons that provided the country with the greatest degree of deterrence. Shamkhani named ballistic missiles as a key category among such weapons. (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 December 2000). As for the role envisaged for the Shihab-3s by the Iranians, the defence minister of the Islamic Republic characterized it as follows: "We have prepared ourselves to absorb the first strike so that it inflicts the least damage on us. We have, however, prepared a second strike which can decisively avenge the first one, while preventing a third strike against us" (cited in Eisenstadt 2004: 21).

[258] Defence minister Shamkhani clad the Iranian thinking in the following words: "The day that Iraq attacked Iran, it acted on the basis of a wrong analysis of the situation. Iraq felt that the balance of power was upset and that it was stronger than Iran. The day that Iraq attacked Kuwait, it felt that the balance of power had been overthrown because of the West's wrong analysis of the situation in Iraq. That was why Iraq attacked Kuwait. The balance of power should be kept steady and uniform. The day this balance is upset, clashes and acts of aggression begin in or outside this region [the Middle East]. Our defence industry and our armed forces have concentrated all their efforts on ensuring that the balance of power is preserved" (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 December 2000).

[259] For a discussion of the missile-related military lessons drawn by the Iranians from the Iran–Iraq war, see Chubin (1994: 20–23).

[260] As in the case of nuclear weapons, the purpose of the emphasis put by the Iranians on the threat of Israel, instead of Iraq, was to promote Iranian–Arab solidarity and relations. By making a linkage between their ballistic missiles and Israel, Iranian authorities also sought to underscore their Islamic credentials. This ideological effort led Iranian officials even to go so far as to claim that Shihab-3 was a tool for defending the whole of the Islamic community and the oppressed world. (Chubin 2002: 57–59, 130)

such crucial areas as space exploration, telecommunications, and broadcasting. Therefore, the Iranians argued, one of the aims of the Shihab-3 program was to go past the phase of producing military missiles and to reach the stage of designing and manufacturing satellite launch vehicles. The representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out that due to the various peaceful applications of missile technology, states were increasingly eager to enter into the field of missile technology. Iranian officials left no doubt that their country was planning to be among those states. (A/C.1/54/PV.19, 1999: 20; A/55/116/Add.1, 2000: 2 and Mousavi 2001: 53)

Accordingly, Iranian authorities strongly defended their country's right to use missile technology for both military and peaceful purposes.[261] But their pronouncements also indicated that the Islamic Republic viewed ballistic missiles as symbols of national prestige and status. Thus, in July 2000, for example, the commander of the IRGC stated that thanks to its Shihab-3 missiles, Iran had become a regional military power. Other Iranian officials included their country in the "exclusive club of missile technology possessors." All the major powers in the world, the Iranians observed, had reserved a prominent role for missiles in their military planning. (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 July 2000; A/55/116/Add.1, 2000: 2 and Fadaifard 2000)

Following the July 1998 test of Shihab-3, Iran announced that its missile development program would include work on missiles with greater ranges and payloads than those of the Shihab-3. At the same time, however, the Iranians were careful to point out that the planned Shihab-4 and Shihab-5 missiles would only serve the Islamic Republic's civilian needs.[262] Iran's defence minister underscored this point in February 1999 by declaring that Shihab-3 would remain the last military missile his country would produce. He added that Iran would continue the development of Shihab-4 but that the missile would be a peaceful, civilian satellite launch vehicle. (Chubin 2002: 56; *Arms Control Today*, January/February 1999 and *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 26 July 2000)

Yet in early 2002, the Islamic Republic's political and military leadership reportedly decided to stop the development of Shihab-4 so that Iran could not be accused of constituting a missile threat to Europe and the United States. In November 2003 – in the

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[261] Take, for example, the following statement made by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic's defence ministry in July 2001: "Iran's missile plans are [...] its natural right and in line with developing Iran's capabilities in the aerospace field" (cited in Savyon 2002).

[262] Experts have put the potential range of Shihab-4 and Shihab-5 at 2,000 and 5,000–10,000 kilometers, respectively. While Shihab-5 has been said to be more or less at the stage of a paper design, the Shihab-4 missile is believed to be based on the Soviet SS-4 missile. Russian assistance is thus expected to play a

midst of the diplomatic confrontation, discussed below, between Iran and the IAEA over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program – Iranian authorities officially announced that their country would indeed suspend the development of Shihab-4.[263] However, as the Islamic Republic made it also known that it would continue to execute its Shihab-3 program and reserve itself the right to develop a space launch vehicle, the diplomatic value of its November 2003 announcement diminished significantly.[264] For those concerned over Iranian missile activities, the Islamic Republic's pronouncements continued to follow too closely the argumentative pattern typical for countries involved in ballistic missile development. Karp characterizes the behaviour of such countries in the following way: "At first they may stress space launch capabilities or conventional warheads, later chemical and biological weapons, all the while waiting for nuclear requirements and technical opportunities to come together."[265] (Savyon 2002; *Strategic Comments* 2003b: 1 and Karp 2000: 108)

5.3.2.2 The international missile debate

Iran's first flight test of Shihab-3 in July 1998 was not the only major ballistic missile-related experiment carried out that year. At the end of August 1998, North Korea conducted its first flight of the Taep'o-dong ballistic missile system, in addition to which the 1998 nuclear test crisis in South Asia included a ballistic missile test duel between India and Pakistan. And on top of these military experiments, international debate on ballistic missile proliferation was greatly influenced by the publication in the United States of the so-called Rumsfeld Commission Report. The report –which provided an evaluation of the ballistic missile threat to the United States – concluded that "rogue states" could threaten the United States in the future with long-range ballistic missiles armed with WMD. The report's conclusion significantly strengthened

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crucial role in future Iranian work on Shihab-4 and Shihab-5. (Eisenstadt 2001a: 23; Eisenstadt 2001b and Katzman 2001: 7)

[263] Iran's announcement that it was stopping its Shihab-4 project suggests that the authorities of the Islamic Republic view their missiles as a diplomatic trump card in international negotiations. Hadian (2004: 64) argues that Iran might be willing to permanently stop the development of long-range ballistic missiles and to limit the deployment of Shihab-3 if such moves would contribute to the conclusion of a comprehensive political deal between Iran and the United States.

[264] The problem with space launch vehicles is that they consist of many of the same components and technologies that are used in the manufacturing of military missiles. Therefore, civilian space launch vehicles can easily be converted into weapons.

[265] Karp (2000: 107) further argues that because international law allows states to acquire and possess ballistic missiles, countries like Iran have been able to use their missiles as symbols of a national WMD capability while simultaneously remaining committed to their arms control commitments.

the hand of those in the United States who advocated the creation of a national missile defence system that would act as a shield against the missiles of countries like Iran.[266] (Rubin 2000: 83 and Karp 2000: 117)

A year later, in October 1999, the members of the Missile Technology Control Regime,[267] the main international arrangement to limit the spread of missiles and missile technology, gathered to consider strengthened measures to control the proliferation of ballistic missiles. In the wake of the MTCR's meeting and the increasing international attention on ballistic missiles, Iran launched a diplomatic counterattack which seemingly aimed at taking the steam out of the diplomatic process led by the MTCR as well as at improving the Islamic Republic's international image and securing its interests in the missile issue.

On 22 October 1999, at the 54th session of the UN General Assembly, the Islamic Republic introduced a draft resolution specifically dealing with the topic of missiles. The draft resolution requested the UN secretary-general to prepare a report – with the assistance of a panel of qualified governmental experts on the basis of equitable geographical distribution – on the issue of missiles in all its aspects for the consideration of the General Assembly at its 56th session. But as some delegations wanted to have more time to consider the Iranian proposal, it was not accepted until a year later. In its resolution of 20 November 2000, entitled "Missiles" and based on Iran's draft text of 31 October 2000, the General Assembly asked the secretary-general to prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects for the assembly's consideration at its 57th session in 2002. (A/C.1/54/L.12, 1999; A/C.1/55/L.1/Rev. 1, 2000 and 55/33 A, 2000)

Elaborating on their country's UN proposal and its approach to missile control, the officials of the Islamic Republic acknowledged that the concerns over the proliferation of ballistic missiles and their development "beyond necessary national defence" were

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[266] As such, the fact that the Rumsfeld Commission singled out Iran as one of the potential missile threats to the United States was nothing new. Iran had already been referred to in the United States, for example, as a justification for the country's theater missile defence (TMD) efforts which aimed to protect American troops, facilities, and allies overseas. Generally, states have three basic options to counter the threat of ballistic missiles. In the first place, they can try to defend themselves through the development of anti-ballistic missile systems. Secondly, they can rely on diplomacy by contributing to the establishment international arrangements for the halting and the prevention of missile proliferation. Finally, states may try to neutralize their adversaries' missiles by conducting pre-emptive military attacks. (*Disarmament Diplomacy*, November 1997 and Sheppard 2000: 9–11)

[267] The MTCR is an informal, non-treaty association of states which establishes a set of export control guidelines which are implemented by the participating countries according to their own national legislation. For information about the MTCR, see Ozga (1994) and the regime's own website at <www.mtcr.info>.

legitimate. Furthermore, the Iranians generally recognized that there was a linkage between missiles and WMD, even if they simultaneously stressed that the issue of missiles should by no means be viewed as an exclusively WMD-related matter. While expressing their readiness to take part in multilateral diplomatic deliberations on missile control, Iranian authorities called on governments to adopt a "comprehensive, balanced, and non-discriminatory" missile control approach that would take states' individual concerns and interests in consideration and address the issue of missile in all its aspects.[268] (A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 29; Fadaifard 2000 and A/55/116/Add.1, 2000: 3)

Due to the necessity of a truly international approch to the question of missiles, the Iranians concluded, international norms and guidelines on missiles could be credible and effective only if they were universally agreed on within the framework of the UN. In the view of the Islamic Republic, the export controls implemented by the MTCR and individual states were "discriminatory," "narrowly-defined," and therefore unacceptable. Like many other developing countries, Iran regarded such missile control arrangements as another outside effort to hamper its legitimate defence activities and scientific and technological development. (Fadaifard 2000; A/55/116/Add. 1, 2000: 3 and Soltanieh 2001b: 2)

And yet, at the same time, Iran eagerly claimed that its missile programs were not dependent on foreign assistance. Iranian officials, defence minister Shamkhani included, went as far as alleging that the Islamic Republic had neither used nor needed foreign experts to develop and produce the missiles in its possession. For this reason, the Iranians argued, the efforts by the United States and other Western countries to pressure countries like Russia and China to end their arms dealings with the Islamic Republic had no impact whatsoever on Iran's missile activities.[269] (*IHT*, 27 May 2002 and *Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002)

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[268] According to the Islamic Republic, its missile study proposal constituted a prerequisite and the start for a process to address missiles globally. As far as the content of the missile study carried out by the UN panel of governmental experts was concerned, the Khatami administration noted that the study could include a general assessment of (a) the overall programs for the development and production of various types of missiles worldwide; (b) the overall scientific and technical research for quantitative development of the missiles already deployed and the plans for the development of new generations of missiles; (c) the efforts by states or groups of states to address the question of missiles at the regional and the international level; (d) the military doctrines of states and the role of missiles therein as a deterrent or a threat perception; and (e) the views of the civil society on missiles. (A/C.1/54/PV.12, 1999: 29; Fadaifard 2000 and A/55/116/Add.1, 2000: 3)

[269] In January 1999, for example, the United States imposed sanctions against three Russian entities for assisting Iran in its missile efforts. The Islamic Republic responded to the U.S. move by stating that it had had merely scientific and industrial relations with the Russian companies and institutions subjected to U.S. sanctions (*Disarmament Diplomacy*, February 1999).

In order to promote its missile views, the Islamic Republic participated in the diplomatic discussions initiated by the MTCR which aimed at acquiring broad support for the MTCR's draft International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (ICOC).[270] In February 2002, Iran was among the 86 states that gathered in Paris to discuss the MTCR's ICOC proposal. Yet, it was clear right from the conference's start that the Islamic Republic viewed the ICOC as an unwanted alternative to its UN-based approach to missile control. Hence, instead of delving into the modalities of the draft proposal discussed by the participants of the Paris gathering, the Iranian delegation concentrated on stressing that the proper forum for "professional discussion on the issue of ballistic missiles and controlling policies to limit missile proliferation" was the UN. (*Disarmament Diplomacy*, March/April 2002)

As far as the content of the draft ICOC was concerned, the document fought in many ways against the premises of Iran's missile approach. First of all, and unlike the Islamic Republic's diplomacy, it strongly emphasized the linkage between ballistic missiles and WMD, and as a consequence, was directed against states that were believed to be developing ballistic missiles for WMD purposes,[271] including Iran. Secondly, even though the draft code called on states to reduce, where possible, their national holdings of ballistic missiles capable of delivering WMD,[272] it did not offer any concrete benefits for countries willing to do so (Ahlström 2003: 755). Thus, it would have been highly optimistic, to say the least, to expect that the Iranians would have given serious thought to the idea of giving up a military asset defined by them as a crucial element of their country's defence in exchange for vague promises of international cooperation in peaceful uses of space. Similarly, it would have been unrealistic to assume that the Iranians would have been prepared to be among the first countries to subscribe to the

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[270] The first draft of the code of conduct was presented at the MTCR's October 2000 plenary meeting in Helsinki. The ICOC proposal of the MTCR contained three basic objectives. In the first place, it sought to promote the prevention and curbing of the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering WMD, and secondly, to develop norms that would serve that purpose. In addition, the initiative sought to promote confidence between states with regard to missile and space launch vehicle activities. The code of conduct, which is only a politically binding document, was ultimately adopted at an international conference in The Hague – where it was also renamed as The Hague Code of Conduct – on 25 November 2002.

[271] Note, for example, the paragraph 3(e) of the final code document which calls on the states subscribing to the ICOC "not to contribute to, support or assist any Ballistic Missile programme in countries which might be developing or acquiring weapons of mass destruction in contravention of norms established by, and of those countries` obligations under, international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties." The final text of the ICOC is available at <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/hcocfinal.htm>.

[272] Paragraph of 3(c) of the final code document asks states to "exercise maximum possible restraint in the development, testing and deployment of Ballistic Missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass

transparency clauses of the draft code which, among others, called on the subscribing states to provide annual information on their ballistic missile policies and consider inviting international observers to their test-launch sites.[273]

In the light of these factors and the fact that, in the end, the ICOC initiative was meant to supplement the MTCR, it was no wonder that Iran neither attended the international conference held in Madrid in June 2002 to further discuss the code of conduct nor ever signed the final code of conduct document launched in The Hague in November 2002. Instead, Iranian officials praised the missile report prepared by the UN panel of governmental experts which was submitted to the General Assembly by the secretary-general on 23 July 2002. In the view of the Iranian government, whose representative had participated in the panel's deliberations, the expert group had meritoriously mapped out the various dimensions of the missile question.[274] Despite the general nature of the report's content, Iranian authorities added, the work of the expert group had prepared ground for more detailed and action-oriented recommendations in the area of missile control and should therefore be warmly welcomed. (Zarif 2002a; A/58/117/Add. 1, 2003: 2 and A/C.1/58/L.4, 2003: 2)

In a draft resolution introduced by the Islamic Republic at the UN General Assembly in October 2003, which was co-sponsored by Egypt and Indonesia, Iran requested the UN secretary-general to establish a new panel of governmental experts to further explore the issue of missiles in all its aspects and to submit its conclusions to the General Assembly in 2004.[275] The October 2003 proposal, like the previous missile draft resolutions put forth by Iran at the UN, did not get the support of the Western delegations. Most Western governments abstained from voting on the resolution – which ultimately backed the Iranian request for a second UN missile panel –, whereas

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destruction, including, where possible, to reduce national holdings of such missiles, in the interest of global and regional peace and security."

[273] The transparency clauses of the ICOC are listed in its paragraph 4. For a detailed analysis of the MTCR code of conduct, see Ahlström (2003: 749–759).

[274] The UN panel consisted of representatives from 23 countries. The panel's report provided, first of all, an overview of the history, military role, and characteristics of missiles. It also discussed the various factors behind the development, acquisition, and use of missiles. Furthermore, it listed the international arrangements and treaties that have bearing on missile control. Finally, the document discussed the concerns that states have over missiles and their proliferation. The UN panel concluded, among others, that missile-related issues had ramifications for international peace and security and that states should further explore various approaches to the control of missiles. (A/57/229, 2002: 1–20)

[275] Iran was of the opinion that the second panel of governmental experts should, first, "seek complementary measures to explore ways and means to secure the international community against the threats posed by some types of missiles," secondly, "discuss and prepare specific recommendations with a view to dispelling the concerns of all States on the issue of missiles in all their aspects," and thirdly,

the United States and Israel specifically voted against it. (A/C.1/58/L.4, 2003: 2 and A/RES/58/37, 2003)

The Islamic Republic portrayed the Western opposition to its UN initiatives as an effort to protect the activities of the MTCR and to undermine the chances for the creation of a truly multilateral approach to missile control. By referring, among others, to the work carried out by the United States on NMD and TMD systems,[276] the Iranians also questioned the West's sincerity in the area of missile control. According to Iran, the fact that the majority of UN member states had supported the Islamic Republic's missile initiatives had testified to international community's desire to deal with the issue of missiles expressly within the framework of the world organization. (A/C.1/54/PV.19, 1999: 20–21; A/55/116/Add.1, 2000: 2 and *IRNA*, 13 November 1999). Underscoring the importance of inter-state dialogue as well as the participation of all countries in international missile deliberations, the Khatami administration called, in 2002, also on the Geneva-based CD to start to deal with the issue (Fadaifard 2000 and CD/PV.893, 2002: 14).

In the final analysis, however, Iranian authorities were not necessarily dissatisfied with the fact that their initiatives encountered opposition at the UN. As a country that had heavily invested in ballistic missile development, Iran had no interest in quick and far-reaching missile control measures. Thus, while the Islamic Republic sought to portray itself as an active player in the international missile control debate, its pronouncements made no mention of measures that would limit states' missile-related research and development activities. It is telling that Islamic Iran, which had always stressed the importance of multilateral arrangements and treaties in regulating states' armament efforts, went on stating that as far as missiles were concerned, "it might not be necessary to automatically take the stereotypical path of negotiating a convention banning missile development and proliferation" (A/55/116/Add.1: 2000: 3).

5.3.2.3 The alleged Israel connection

According to the Khatami administration, Iran's missile initiatives at the UN demonstrated that the Islamic Republic was seriously committed to a policy of

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"examine a specific mechanism to promote the peaceful uses of missiles, inter alia, in launching civil satellites and space vehicles." (A/58/117/Add. 1, 2003: 2)

[276] Iran's views on the U.S. missile defence efforts will be discussed below in the present chapter.

confidence-building. In the summer of 1999, newspaper reports emerged alleging that the Iranians were pursuing confidence-building with their stated archenemy in the Middle East – Israel. The reports claimed that Iran had approached Israel through the assistance of the British government and proposed security talks between the two countries. As for the content of the alleged talks, the Iranians had reportedly put forth three topics: (a) discussions about a declaration through which the countries of the Middle East would pledge not to use missiles in their possession for a first strike; (b) talks over an agreement that would prohibit the regional states from arming their missiles with WMD warheads; and finally (c) discussions about restrictions on missiles serving military purposes and having a range greater than 1,300 kilometers.[277] (Steinberg 2000a; *The Independent*, 21 June 1999 and *Financial Times*, 21 June 1999)

Whether or not Iran had in fact tried to open a secret discussion channel with Israel, the Khatami administration strongly denied the accuracy of the reports making such a claim. The officials of the Islamic Republic labelled the reports as a product of the "Zionist propaganda machine" which tried, in vain, to hurt the image of their country. Iranian representatives relied on similar type of argumentation in September 1999, after a new round of reporting on the alleged Iranian–Israeli connection had surfaced. According to the reports published in September 1999, which did not provide any new information about the content of the alleged Iranian proposals, Britain had continued to act as a conduit for confidence-building initiatives from Tehran to Tel Aviv. (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 21 June 1999; *The Times*, 30 September 1999 and *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 September 1999)

If ever made, Iran's missile dialogue initiatives amounted to a ground-breaking diplomatic move on the part of the Islamic Republic. Yet, as for their content, the reported Iranian proposals were strictly in line with the Islamic Republic's traditional arms control argumentation. First of all, following the July 1998 test flight of Shihab-3, the Iranians had already declared their unilateral commitment to a no-first use missile policy. A regional ban on missiles armed with WMD, on the other hand, would have signified a major WMD arms control step in the Middle East. Finally, Iran's call for a cap on the range of the region's ballistic missiles would have left Shihab-3s out of the arrangement's scope. Actually, a regional agreement on the range limit of 1,300

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[277] In the mid-1990s, some Iranian officials had reportedly claimed that their government was pursuing a tacit policy of not developing ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel. The purpose of such a policy, the Iranians had said, was not to provide the Israelis with a pretext for a pre-emptive military strike against their country. (Arnett 1998a: 439)

kilometers would have equalled to a tacit legitimization of the Islamic Republic's existing ballistic missile capabilities.

Iran's alleged proposals to Israel would thus suggest that the authorities of the Islamic Republic sought to use the bilateral channel mainly to incite Israel to ease diplomatic pressure on their country and its weapons programs as well as to inhibit Israeli military strikes, whether carried out pre-emptively or in a crisis situation, against Iran.[278] Interestingly, neither the Islamic Republic's alleged proposals – which may have simultaneously been intended to act as a gesture of reassurance and good will vis-à-vis Western governments – nor the Khatami administration's arms control pronouncements at large referred to Israel's TMD activities. In a similar manner, Iranian statements made no allusions to reports according to which other regional actors, such as Turkey and the GCC countries, were considering TMD systems as a defensive option against the Islamic Republic's ballistic missiles. Iran's silence on TMD may have stemmed from the Islamic Republic's belief that by strengthening and modernizing its ballistic missile inventory, it would, at the end of the day, be capable of penetrating Israel's TMD shield and that of other regional states. Whatever the ultimate explanation, should the Israelis – who have been working on their Arrow TMD program, with the help of the Americans, since 1988[279] – or other regional actors manage to develop an efficient anti-ballistic missile system, it would undermine the credibility of the Iranian missile deterrent and set new requirements for potential arms control arrangements in the Middle East.

5.3.3 The question of Iran's nuclear program

Due to continuing international concern over the motives of Iran's nuclear activities, gaining additional momentum after India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests of May 1998, the Khatami administration was forced to pay increased diplomatic attention to defending the Islamic Republic's nuclear efforts.[280] As the substantive foundation for

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[278] It should be noted that Israeli authorities had been openly speaking of the possibility of a pre-emptive military attack not only against the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities but also against Iran's ballistic missile sites (Amirahmadi 1998: 3).

[279] For details, see <http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/program/arrow.htm>.

[280] As far as Iran's nuclear activities at the time were concerned, Eisenstadt (1998a: 81) lists three principal factors that were raising questions about the Islamic Republic's nuclear intentions. First of them was the fact that the Iranians were investigating various uranium enrichment techniques and gas centrifuge enrichment, in particular. Iran's interest in acquiring nuclear power plants and research

such a defence had already been built during the Rafsanjani presidency, the Khatami administration concentrated on repeating and refining the Iranian arguments.

Thus, during the first years of the Khatami presidency, the officials of the Islamic Republic reaffirmed that Iran was not interested in nuclear armaments and that its nuclear program served only non-military purposes.[281] Iran, president Khatami and his lieutenants declared, was strictly observing its disarmament commitments and, as a victim of WMD use, had a strong interest in international arrangements controlling and banning those armaments.[282] Pointing to the IAEA's regular inspections in Iran and particularly to the IAEA special visits that were conducted in the country in 1992 and 1993, and again in 1997 and 2000,[283] the Iranians stressed that their country's compliance with the NPT had been repeatedly verified (GC/41/OR.2, 1997: 13; A/52/PV.49, 1997: 3 and *IRNA*, 17 May 2000).

From 2001 onwards, however, the Islamic Republic's nuclear program fell under unparalleled international scrutiny. The new situation faced by the Iranians resulted, on the one hand, from the policies of the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush whose strong focus on the question of WMD proliferation put Iran under increased international pressure. On the other hand, the revelations in the course of 2003 by the IAEA that the Islamic Republic had violated its IAEA safeguards agreement on numerous occasions – above all, by secretly developing and testing the ability to produce fissile material – fuelled suspicions that the Islamic Republic was actively pursuing a nuclear weapons capability.

5.3.3.1 Iran as part of the "axis of evil"

Taking office in January 2001, the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush placed the issue of WMD high on its security and foreign policy agenda. In the view of

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reactors, together with its alleged efforts to obtain fissile material in the former Soviet Union, were the other main causes of international concern.

[281] In fact, as later revealed by Iranian officials, at the end of the 1990s, during the first term of the Khatami presidency, the Islamic Republic significantly boosted its nuclear activities. As noted by Hasan Ruhani, the secretary of the SNSC during Khatami's tenure of office: "We redoubled our [nuclear] efforts in the country and granted the AEOI authorities it did not have before. That is to say, we gave the agency a freer hand with new credits and a more liberal spending procedure, new facilities, and special regulations. This allowed them to become more active, without being forced to go through bureaucratic and regulatory labyrinths" (Ruhani 2005: 2).

[282] See A/52/PV.6 (1997: 25); A/53/PV.8 (1998: 7) and A/54/PV.67 (1999: 25).

[283] The IAEA's third and fourth special visits to Iran took place in 1997 and 2000, respectively. After both visits, the agency once again concluded that nothing had suggested that Iran's nuclear activities were not in conformity with international regulations. (Zak 2002: 21–22)

the Bush administration, an attack against the United States by a "rogue state" resorting to WMD was a threat scenario that the Americans could not ignore. Emphasizing its commitment to tackling the threat of WMD-armed rogue states, the Bush government declared, from its inception, that it accorded a high priority to building a NMD system capable of protecting the U.S. mainland, together with America's allies and U.S. forces deployed abroad, from accidental missile launches and from ballistic missile attacks by countries such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. (Landau 2001 and Landau 2003: 35)

Despite the fact that the NMD plan was contradictory to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which prohibited the United States and Russia from developing nationwide defences against ballistic missiles, the Bush administration was determined to go ahead with its NMD plan.[284] The Bush team's disregard for the ABM Treaty was indicative of its position according to which the United States would not let international organizations and agreements constrain its ability to guarantee its national security and vital interests. As the Bush administration viewed international arms control arrangements as incapable of satisfactorily tackling the threat of rogue states, it adopted a unilateral diplomatic course and, during its first months in office, declared the ABM Treaty anachronous,[285] rejected the CTBT, and blocked the adoption of an additional verification protocol to the BTWC. (Landau 2003: 36 and Jervis 2003: 374)

No wonder, then, that from Iran's point of view the U.S. foreign policy under president Bush seemed disquieting. For one thing, the Islamic Republic was now included in the group of a handful of regimes that were openly named by U.S. policy-makers and military planners as one of the prime enemies of their country. For another, the Bush administration's disregard for multilateral arms control diplomacy significantly complicated the Iranians' efforts to convince the world of their opposition to nuclear arms and other WMD. Put another way: if the Islamic Republic's active participation in all the major international disarmament instruments was regarded as meaningless by the Americans, how could the Iranians ever put up an effective diplomatic defence against the accusations that they were pursuing WMD capabilities?

If Iranian authorities found the task of convincing the world of the Islamic Republic's peaceful intentions difficult during the Bush administration's first months in office, it certainly did not become easier after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the

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[284] For the details of the ABM Treaty, see Goldblat (1994: 55–56).

[285] The members of the Bush team characterized the ABM Treaty as a "relic" and "ancient history" (Landau 2001).

United States. The fact that the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington had caused the death of some 3,000 civilians, damaged both the U.S. and global economy, and revealed how vulnerable the United States was to terrorist activities led the Bush administration to redefine the threats to U.S. national security and to formulate a new foreign policy orientation. The purpose of the new U.S. course of action – whose adoptation was facilitated by president Bush's and his advisers' general political outlook – was to confront and eliminate two primary national security threats: international terrorism and rogue states possessing or pursuing WMD capabilities.

The post-September 11 foreign policy of the United States based on a set of beliefs or principles which subsequently became known as the Bush doctrine. The basic premise of the doctrine was that under the existing conditions of terrorism, rogue states, and WMD, the security of the United States necessitated an active American foreign policy that would boldly seek to eliminate terrorism- and WMD-related dangers before they would materialize into actual attacks. Thus, while continuing to protect the mainland United States, the Bush administration concluded, the Americans had to act globally and extend the fight against terrorism and WMD overseas.[286] (Posen 2003: 45 and Landau 2003: 36–37)

The Bush doctrine's emphasis on the strategic concepts of preemption and prevention indicated that the Bush administration was not shying away from the use of military force if it was needed to support America's diplomatic efforts and to promote U.S. national interests.[287] If necessary, president Bush and his advisers stated, the United States would be prepared to preemptively resort to military force in order to undermine the effects of an imminent terrorist or military attack. In addition, by keeping the option of a preventive war open, the Bush administration made it also known that it was ready

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[286] Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration continued to promote its pet project, namely the NMD plan. In December 2001, president Bush announced that the United States would withdraw from the ABM Treaty because the document was preventing the Americans from developing defences against potential ballistic missile attacks by terrorists and rogue states. The U.S. withdrawal took effect on 13 June 2002. Six months later, in December 2002, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it would begin deploying an initial ballistic missile defence system in 2004–2005. According to the Pentagon, the purpose of the deployment was to meet the near-term ballistic missile threat to the homeland, to deployed U.S. forces, as well as to the friends and allies of the United States. (*The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty at a Glance* 2003 and Kile 2003: 605–606)

[287] Inversely, the strong emphasis put on preemption and prevention showed that the Bush administration did not believe that military policies based on deterrence – the key strategic principle of the Cold War era – would be capable of containing the threats posed by international terrorism and rogue states (Evron 2003: 24 and Jervis 2003: 369).

to destroy the military capabilities of the actors that were determined to attack America in the long term. (Evron 2003: 24–27)

Indeed, it was the superior, unparalleled military strength of the United States which formed the cornerstone of the Bush government's post-September 11 campaign against international terrorism and rogue states.[288] As the United States was portrayed as being in the middle of a war, a "war on terror," military force was defined by the Bush administration as a legitimate means to be used in defeating "terrorists and tyrants." The Bush administration also believed that even if the rest of the world disapproved America's use of military force, or the way it wielded its political and economic influence to transform the world, the Americans would have to act unilaterally. In the view of president Bush and his advisers, the United States was the only power capable of creating a peaceful and stable world order. This being the case, the argument went, the United States would have to reshape the world and assert its hegemonic position in the international system. (Posen 2003: 6–7, 45 and Jervis 2003: 373 –376)

The belief that a state's foreign policy was determined by the nature of its domestic political system constituted another key component of the Bush doctrine. Authoritarian regimes, the representatives of the Bush administration maintained, were prone to aggressive and threatening behaviour, which also explained their interest in WMD. On the other hand, the Bush team argued, authoritarian regimes' mistreatment of their own citizens generated anger and frustration which served as a breeding ground for terrorist movements. These conclusions led the Bush administration to come up with the policy prescription that it was in the interest of America and other nations that the United States would embark upon strong measures to spread democracy throughout the world. (Jervis 2003: 365–368)

For Iranian authorities, the post-September 11 shift in the Bush administration's foreign policy thinking represented a dangerous development. The fact that the Islamic Republic was viewed in Washington as a country that was interested in WMD, supported international terrorism, and oppressed its own people was nothing new in itself. Iran had already born the label of a rogue state for years. But whereas before September 11, 2001, despite its hegemonic and unilateralist predispositions,[289] the Bush

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[288] For a discussion of the various components of America's conventional military superiority – its command of the sea, space, and air –, see Posen (2003: 11–19).

[289] According to Posen, by the late 1990s, the U.S. political elite had concluded that their country was by far the strongest power in the international system and needed to pursue a hegemonic foreign policy. What distinguished the Democrats and the Republicans from each other in this regard was the question of

administration had been pursuing a cautious foreign policy and been reluctant to intervene directly and militarily in international crises,[290] the post-September 11 U.S. approach posed serious challenges to Iranian decision-makers. Now the Iranians were confronted with an American administration that was speaking of the need to alter the status quo of international politics, was prepared to use military force to do that, had a strong domestic political backing, and was not willing to court the world opinion.

The Bush administration's view that Islamic Iran was among the reasons why the United States had to revise its foreign policy was explicitly 'codified' in president Bush's state of the union address of 29 January 2002. In that speech, president Bush placed Iran – together with Iraq and North Korea – on an "axis of evil," that is, among countries that were purportedly seeking WMD, exporting terror, and repressing their citizens. The three countries, the U.S. president warned, could provide WMD to terrorists or use such armaments to attack America's allies or to blackmail the United States. Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, president Bush claimed, posed a grave and a growing danger to the peace of the world.[291]

The state of the union address of January 2002 not only identified Iran as a country standing at the intersection of the United States' biggest security concerns, but it also implied that the Bush administration was determined to deal, in one way or the other, with the threat posed by the Islamic Republic and the other axis of evil countries. Thus, for the Iranians, the speech marked the beginning of a period during which Iran had to prepare itself for an imminent diplomatic or military confrontation with the United States.

Following the January 2002 state of the union address, there were a number of developments that only intensified Iranian fears of a showdown with the Bush administration. In March 2002, the details of the new U.S. Nuclear Posture Review – a classified document mandated by the Congress to clarify U.S. nuclear deterrence policy and strategy for the next five to ten years – became available through the media. From the leaked portions of the review the authorities of the Islamic Republic learned that the Bush administration reserved itself the right to employ nuclear weapons in conflicts, irrespective of whether the adversaries of the United States had used WMD first. The

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how the United States would best promote its national interests. While the Democrats emphasized the importance of multilateral institutions in promoting American interests, the Republicans leant on a unilateral foreign policy orientation. (Posen 2003: 5–6)

[290] For a discussion of the Bush administration's pre-September 11 foreign policy, see Ben-Zvi (2003: 15–17).

Iranians also learned that their country was listed in the posture document as one of the seven potential targets against which the United States should be prepared to use nuclear weapons.[292] (*Arms Control Today*, April 2002)

On 17 September 2002, the Bush administration published The National Security Strategy of the United States, a compilation of statements and addresses made by president Bush which served as the official expression of the tenets of the Bush doctrine (Ben-Zvi 2003: 17). Later, in December 2002, the Bush administration released its National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction which elaborated on how the administration sought to stop and defend against the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. The document spoke of a strategy based on three main pillars: counterproliferation,[293] non-proliferation,[294] and consequence management.[295]

The December 2002 document contained many of the elements the Bush administration had already raised in its prior statements and policy documents, including the principle that America would reserve itself the right to respond with all available military means to an attack carried out with nuclear, biological or chemical weapons against the United States, its forces abroad, or its friends and allies. The document also made mention of the concepts of preemption and prevention that were referred to by the Bush administration as potential counterproliferation measures. As far as the pillar of non-proliferation was concerned, the December 2002 document suggested that despite its skeptical view of the existing international arms control arrangements, the Bush team was willing to work within them and to contribute to their strengthening.[296] (*National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* 2002: 3)

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[291] *The President's State of the Union Address* (2002).

[292] Also see above the relevant passages in section 5.3.1.2.

[293] The counterproliferation pillar referred to measures to prevent the movement of WMD materials, technology, and expertise to hostile states and terrorist organizations. In addition, it referred to military and political tools that would be used to deter potential adversaries from seeking or using WMD. Furthermore, the concept of counterproliferation covered steps that would strengthen the ability of the United States to defend against WMD-armed adversaries and to mitigate the effects of WMD attacks against deployed American forces. For details, see *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (2002: 2–3).

[294] The non-proliferation pillar consisted of six elements: active non-proliferation diplomacy; multilateral regimes; non-proliferation and threat reduction cooperation; controls on nuclear materials; U.S. export controls; and non-proliferation sanctions. For details, see ibid. (3–5).

[295] Consequence management referred to the efforts by U.S. authorities to secure the preparedness of their country to respond to the consequences of WMD use on the American soil (ibid.: 5).

[296] Take, for example, the following excerpt from the December 2002 strategy document: "Existing nonproliferation and arms control regimes play an important role in our overall strategy. The United States will support those regimes that are currently in force, and work to improve the effectiveness of, and compliance with, those regimes." As for nuclear arms control, the document stated that the U.S. diplomatic efforts aimed, among others, at the strengthening of the NPT and the IAEA, at promoting the ratification of an IAEA Additional Protocol by all NPT states parties, at negotiating a FMCT "that

Yet, the December 2002 document also made it clear that the Bush administration's arms control diplomacy would not solely rely on the existing multilateral arrangements. In addition to pointing to the importance of bilateral diplomatic measures, the paper emphasized that the United States would pursue "country-specific strategies" to deal with perceived WMD threats and "build coalitions" to support its diplomatic activities. Of course, the term "country-specific strategies" did not only refer to diplomatic measures, but also included the option of military force. In this sense, then, the December 2002 document served as another reminder of the Bush team's determination to act unilaterally and even to resort to military means if international cooperation did not contribute to the protection of America's vital security interests.

Apart from the Bush administration's policy statements and documents – in which, as indicated above, Iran repeatedly played a central role as a threat –, the steps taken by the Bush team after September 11, 2001, fundamentally transformed the Islamic Republic's security environment. Naturally, the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and later in Iraq were the most significant developments in this respect. On 7 October 2001, after having quickly formed a broad international coalition with worldwide support, the Americans took preemptive military action against the ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the Al-Qaida terrorists operating there. And on 19 March 2003, the U.S. military invaded Iraq in order to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein from power. While the toppling of the ruling regimes of Afghanistan and Iraq, two of Iran's major enemies at the time, served the Islamic Republic's immediate security interests, the Bush administration's military moves in Iran's neighbourhood posed a new dilemma for that country's leaders: Iran had become encircled by regimes with close political ties with Washington as well as by U.S. troops stationed on those countries' soil.

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advances U.S. security interests," and at the strengthening of both the NSG and the Zangger Committee. (Ibid.: 4). The fact that the Bush team had coldshouldered many arms control arrangements and on-going multilateral diplomatic processes had led some observers to strongly criticize the administration's appoach to arms control diplomacy. Referring specifically to nuclear arms control, Perkovich (2003b: 8), for example, accused the Bush administration of diplomatic selectivity of three kinds. He characterized the Bush administration as follows: "It deems some states' nuclear weapons good, while others' are bad. It selects one treaty, the NPT, for enforcement while dismissing others. And it selects only some provisions of the NPT – the constraints on others – for enforcement." However, as pointed out by Jervis (2003: 376), in the view of president Bush and his advisers the accusations of selectivity and political double standard ignored the fact that because of its role as the only country capable of securing world order, the United States could not always be bound by the same norms and rules as other nations.

5.3.3.2 The diplomatic showdown with the IAEA, 2002–2003

The Bush doctrine and its call for an active and strong U.S. foreign policy raised concerns in many quarters of the world, not only in Tehran. Similarly, the Bush administration's way of dealing with the Islamic Republic and its nuclear program had its critics. Other major international players, such as the EU, Russia, and Japan, viewed the U.S. attempts to stigmatize and isolate Iran as undermining international efforts to induce the Iranians to abandon the worrying aspects of their policies. For the Islamic Republic, those powers' preference for engagement was a factor which enabled the Iranians to diplomatically circumvent, to some extent at least, the adverse effects of the U.S. diplomatic pressure. From autumn 2002 onwards, however, Iran's counterbalancing tactics began to lose their potency. This was due to the new revelations about the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities which raised serious questions about Iran's nuclear intentions and led the major powers to tighten their diplomatic ranks vis-à-vis Tehran.

On 14 August 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), the Paris-based political front of the MKO, released information indicating that the Islamic Republic was conducting secret nuclear activities at two sites previously unknown to the IAEA. One of the sites was told to be located near the city of Arak in western Iran, and as it became subsequently known, was a heavy water plant under construction. The second site, Natanz, was located near the city of Kashan and contained two facilities intended for the enrichment of uranium through the gas centrifuge enrichment technique.

In September 2002, following the revelations by the NCRI, the head of the AEOI stated at the 46th regular session of the IAEA's general conference that Iran was embarking on an ambitious long-term plan to construct nuclear power plants – the stated Iranian aim was to build a total reactor capacity of 6000 MW within two decades – and the associated technologies, including nuclear fuel-cycle facilities. More specifically, in September 2002, the Islamic Republic officially acknowledged to the IAEA that it was indeed building a heavy water production plant at Arak and a uranium enrichment facility at Natanz,[297] in addition to which the Iranians, caught off guard by the MKO's

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[297] The information provided by the NCRI in August 2002 had suggested that the Iranians were building a nuclear fuel manufacturing plant at Natanz. Using satellite information and intelligence from its member states, however, the IAEA was able to conclude in September 2002 that Iran was actually constructing a uranium enrichment plant at the site. Subsequently, in March 2003, the United States revealed that it had

unexpected revelations, gave a positive response to the IAEA's request to visit the two sites later in the course of 2002. (Aghazadeh 2002: 3–4; GOV/2003/40, 2003: 1–2 and *Arms Control Today*, April 2003)

From a purely legal point of view, the Islamic Republic's construction activities at Arak and Natanz were consistent with its international disarmament commitments, for Iran's 1974 safeguards agreement with the IAEA did not obligate it to inform the agency of new nuclear facilities until six months before nuclear material was introduced into them.[298] In principle, thus, there was no legal obligation on the part of the Iranians to allow the IAEA to inspect the newly discovered sites.[299] In practice, however, the major international attention on the sites forced the Islamic Republic to respond to the IAEA's requests to visit Arak and Natanz and to answer IAEA officials' questions about the details of the Iranian nuclear program. (Albright and Hinderstein 2002 and *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2003)

While under increasing international pressure, on 9 February 2003, president Khatami gave a landmark speech which indicated that Iran's nuclear activities were much more advanced than previously known. In his address, delivered during a meeting with Iranian university professors, Khatami stated that his country needed to control the entire nuclear fuel-cycle for the purpose of electricity production. He also made it clear that the Islamic Republic was determined to develop nuclear technology and that it was its legitimate right to do so. Furthermore, the Iranian president took the occasion to "assure all peace-loving individuals in the world that Iran's efforts in the field of nuclear

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provided information about Natanz to the IAEA but was not willing to specify when this had been done. (Albright and Hinderstein 2002; Albright 2003 and *Arms Control Today*, April 2003)

[298] According to U.S. officials, Iran was the only IAEA member state that still refrained from implementing the IAEA's request of 1992 – made as part of the efforts to strengthen the agency's verification capabilities – which called upon the member states to provide the IAEA with information about a new nuclear facility six months before the start of its construction (*Arms Control Today*, January/February 2003 and Albright and Hinderstein 2002).

[299] In order to refute the claim that their country was engaged in secret nuclear activities, Iranian officials subsequently referred not only to the content of its safeguards agreement with the IAEA but to other factors as well. For one thing, the Iranians maintained that their government's declaration in 2000 to the IAEA that it was planning to construct a uranium conversion facility in Isfahan had effectively amounted to an acknowledgement that it was interested in a uranium enrichment facility as well. Given that uranium hexafluoride, the conversion facility's main product, can only be used as the feedstock of a uranium enrichment project, the officials of the Islamic Republic asked how anybody could accuse Iran of being engaged in secret enrichment efforts. Also, the Iranians pointed out that they had informed the IAEA in June 2002 of their country's "involvement in the various fields of the fuel cycle." Moreover, referring to the Arak heavy water production plant and to its "huge installations and distillation towers," Iranian officials pointed out that such a construction could not be hidden from anyone. Finally, as far as the Natanz enrichment facility was concerned, the Iranians admitted that some structures at the Natanz facility had been built underground but emphasized that this was due to Iran's attempt to protect the facility from aerial attacks against it. (*Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 1, 3–4; *Foreign Ministry Memorandum* 2003: 3–4 and Aghazadeh 2003a: 8)

technology are focused on civilian application and nothing else." (*The New York Times*, 10 February 2003)

In regards to the practical steps Iran was taking in the area of nuclear fuel-cycle, president Khatami pointed out that the Islamic Republic had started to mine uranium near the city of Yazd, was building a uranium oxide production facility, and had almost finished a uranium conversion facility in Isfahan. In addition, he acknowledged the existence of the enrichment plant at Natanz and made it known that Iran was also working on a nuclear fuel manufacturing plant. (Albright 2003 and *Arms Control Today*, March 2003)

Referring to allegations that the Islamic Republic's nuclear fuel-cycle activities testified to Iran's interest in nuclear weapons, president Khatami emphasized that the Islamic Republic was cooperating with the IAEA and "welcomed international supervision to dispel the lies being fabricated against Iran." Despite its initial promises to let the IAEA visit Arak and Natanz in the course of 2002, however, the Islamic Republic had cancelled, without giving a reason, the IAEA delegation's trip to Iran that had been planned for December 2002.[300] In the end, an IAEA delegation led by Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency's director-general, visited the country on 21–22 February 2003 and presented questions to the authorities of the Islamic Republic about the newly discovered Iranian sites and about Iran's plans for the use of nuclear power. (*The New York Times*, 10 February 2003; Albright and Hinderstein 2002 and *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2003)

In many ways, the IAEA's February 2003 trip marked the beginning of the unwinding of the Iranian nuclear tangle. The information either confirmed or provided by the Islamic Republic during that visit not only formed the basis for the IAEA's subsequent inspections on the various aspects of the Iranian nuclear program, but it also increasingly tied Iran's authorities to a diplomatic process from which they could not have withdrawn without major international uproar. Following the February 2003 encounter, thus, the IAEA was able to start to delve into Iran's nuclear activities and to ultimately shed a great deal of new light on the country's nuclear program.

The IAEA's initial findings

During the IAEA delegation's trip to Iran in February 2003, director-general ElBaradei called on Iran to follow a policy of transparency vis-à-vis the agency and to conclude an IAEA additional protocol in order to provide credible assurances that there were no undeclared nuclear activities in the country. The authorities of the Islamic Republic replied by emphasizing their commitment to nuclear transparency and by promising to "actively consider" the signing of the protocol. In addition, the Iranians informed the director-general of their readiness to amend their safeguards agreement according to the request made by the IAEA board of governors in 1992,[301] and as a consequence, inform the IAEA of new nuclear facilities as well as of modifications to existing nuclear facilities as soon as a decision to construct, authoritize construction, or to carry out modifications had been taken. (*Statements of the Director-General* 2003 and GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2–4)

At the same time, however, Iranian officials pointed out to the director-general that they were committed to developing the entire range of nuclear fuel-cycle facilities and that the NPT affirmed their right to do so. The Iranians also argued that the IAEA had a responsibility to help their country in obtaining civil nuclear assistance. Further implying that the Islamic Republic's future collaboration with the IAEA would not be unconditional, Iranian authorities expressed their hope that their cooperation with the agency would be concretely rewarded. (Albright and Hinderstein 2003a)

Referring to its policy of openness, in February 2003, the Islamic Republic provided the IAEA with information about its fuel-cycle plans and allowed the agency to visit the Natanz uranium enrichment site. The site included a gas centrifuge pilot plant nearly ready for operation and a large commercial-scale fuel enrichment plant still under construction. The Iranians told the IAEA of their plan to install 1,000 centrifuges at the pilot plant by the end of 2003, and that the commercial-scale plant would ultimately contain over 50,000 centrifuges.[302] The officials of the Islamic Republic also stated that

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[300] Originally, an IAEA visit to Iran had been scheduled for October 2002 (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2).

[301] Iran confirmed its acceptance of such an amendment to its safeguards agreement in a letter of 26 February 2003 to the IAEA (ibid.).

[302] Based on this information, Albright and Hinderstein estimate that if tapped solely for military purposes, the Natanz facilities could annually produce some 500 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium. That amount would be enough for some 25–30 nuclear bombs per year. Albright and Hinderstein also point out that if deemed necessary, Iran could rapidly switch over from producing low enriched uranium for its nuclear reactors to making weapon-grade uranium at Natanz. The amount of enriched uranium needed for one nuclear weapon could be produced in a few days. (Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

the pilot plant was scheduled to start enriching uranium in June 2003, whereas the work for the placement of centrifuges in the commercial-scale plant would commence in early 2005.[303] Furthermore, the IAEA learned that the Natanz site housed facilities devoted to the assembly and testing of centrifuges. (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2, 5–6 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003a)

At the time of the IAEA delegation's February 2003 tour at Natanz, there was no nuclear material in the centrifuges observed at the site. In fact, Iranian officials told the delegation that the activities related to the testing of individual centrifuges and to the development of an optimized centrifuge design prior to the pilot plant's construction had solely based on extensive modelling and simulation.[304] In short, Iran claimed that it had not theretofore enriched any uranium. Given the Natanz facilities' advanced state,[305] and the fact that centrifuge testing and design optimization would normally involve the enrichment of small amounts of uranium, the IAEA delegates found the Iranian explanation unconvincing. Thus, in order to answer the question of how the Islamic Republic's centrifuge program had reached its existing status without any tests involving the use of nuclear material, as well as to investigate the possibility that Iran had secretly enriched uranium at another location, the IAEA raised the issue with Iranian officials, and consequently, was also allowed to take environmental samples at the Natanz pilot plant.[306] (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2–3, 6 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

During their February 2003 meeting with the authorities of the Islamic Republic, the IAEA delegates raised the name of another Iranian facility that was believed to be

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[303] The Iranians did not indicate when the commercial-scale Natanz plant was expected to be ready for operation (ibid.).

[304] The Iranians also stated that the design and development work on their centrifuge enrichment program had commenced in 1997 (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 6). As far as the source of origin of Iran's centrifuge equipment was concerned, the IAEA delegation was not able to draw definitive conclusions in the matter. However, there were suspicions at the time that contrary to the initial Iranian claim that its centrifuge program was entirely indigenous, the Islamic Republic had received centrifuge design and equipment assistance from Pakistan and that Iran's centrifuge design was similar to the one secretly obtained by Pakistan from the Netherlands in the mid-1970s. (Albright and Hinderstein 2003a and 2003b and *Arms Control Today*, September 2003)

[305] According to one report on the IAEA delegation's February 2003 visit to Natanz, the delegates were taken aback by the sophistication of the site's facilities (*Arms Control Today*, April 2003). Albright and Hinderstein (2003a) point out that the IAEA's February 2003 visit to the Islamic Republic confirmed the fact that Iran had become a member of an "exclusive club of some 10 nations that can build gas centrifuges."

[306] To support their claim that the Islamic Republic had a nuclear weapons program, U.S. officials argued that the Islamic Republic would not have invested in a large and sophisticated uranium enrichment facility such as the one in Natanz without sufficient testing, that is, without having enriched uranium. The Americans also maintained that there was no precedent for testing centrifuges through simulations. (*Arms Control Today*, April 2003 and July/August 2003)

linked to Iran's gas centrifuge enrichment activities, namely that of the Kalaye Electric Company. Alluding to media reports suggesting that the company acted as the headquarters of Iran's centrifuge program and as the site for many of the program's research and development activities, the IAEA requested Iran to elaborate on the workshop's role in its nuclear program. Iranian officials responded by saying that the facility was a watch factory which had also been used to produce centrifuge components, but they strongly rejected the claim that uranium had been enriched at the site. (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003a and 2003b)

The IAEA delegates asked Iran's permission to visit the workshop as well as to take environmental samples there, but their request was declined. According to Iranian officials, the Islamic Republic was not obliged to allow visits to and environmental sampling at the site because it had not concluded the IAEA additional protocol. Later, in March 2003, however, the IAEA was permitted to visit limited parts of the site,[307] and in May 2003, the agency was given full access to the workshop. Nevertheless, Iran still refused to allow environmental sampling at the facility. (GOV/2003, 40: 2003: 2–3)

The acknowledgement by Iranian officials that they were in possession of an undeclared batch of natural uranium originating from China constituted another key finding of the IAEA's February 2003 visit to Iran. The Iranians, who disclosed the transaction only after Chinese officials had first confirmed it to the IAEA, said that they had received natural uranium in the form of uranium hexafluoride – the gaseous feed material for gas centrifuges –, uranium tetrafluoride, and uranium dioxide from the Chinese in 1991.[308] The officials of the Islamic Republic told the IAEA that they had not processed any of the imported uranium hexafluoride and specifically emphasized that no enrichment, centrifuge, or other tests had been conducted with the material. In regards to the other nuclear materials imported from China, Iran informed the IAEA that most of the uranium tetrafluoride obtained had been converted to uranium metal and that some of the uranium dioxide had been used for the testing of uranium purification and conversion processes. (Ibid.: 2, 4–5)

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[307] During its March 2003 visit to the Kalaye site, the IAEA was denied access to two of the facility's rooms. It was claimed at the time that the rooms in question had initially contained centrifuges and that the limits set by the Iranians testified to the Islamic Republic's attempt to clear out any evidence of uranium enrichment at the site. Later, in 2004, the IAEA confirmed the validity of such claims. (Albright and Hinderstein 2003b and GOV/2004/83, 2004: 7)

[308] The Islamic Republic confirmed the importation of natural uranium from China in a separate letter to the IAEA on 26 February 2003 (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2).

After having inspected the containers of the imported uranium hexafluoride in March 2003, however, the IAEA concluded that a small amount of the material was missing. The Iranians responded to the finding by maintaining that two of the three cylinders containing the material had leaked. But given the possibility that the missing material had actually been used in connection with Iran's centrifuge enrichment program, the IAEA kept on investigating the matter. Also, the agency's inspectors were interested in the role of uranium metal in the Islamic Republic's fuel cycle efforts, for as neither Iran's light water reactors nor its planned heavy water reactor would require uranium metal as fuel, the production of uranium metal – which is suitable for the fabrication of nuclear weapons components – could have been indicative of a nuclear weapons effort making use of metallic forms of natural uranium or HEU. (Ibid.: 4–5 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

During their February 2003 meeting with the IAEA delegation in Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic also reconfirmed that they were constructing a heavy water production plant at Arak. And in a letter dated 5 May 2003, the Iranians informed the IAEA for the first time of their plan to construct a heavy water research reactor at Arak.[309] According to Iranian authorities, the purpose of the 40 MW plant – which was named the Iran Nuclear Research Reactor, or the IR-40, and would use natural uranium dioxide fuel and heavy water both as a coolant and moderator – was to produce radioisotopes and to serve as a training facility.[310] The construction of the IR-40 was set out to start in 2004. Moreover, Iran made it known that apart from the planned heavy water production plant and research reactor, its heavy water reactor program would include the construction of a nuclear fuel manufacturing plant at Isfahan. Iranian authorities said that the construction of the Isfahan facility – whose stated purpose was to fabricate fuel assemblies for the IR-40 as well as for the Bushehr-1 light water reactor – was supposed to begin in 2003. Fuel production at Isfahan was planned to start in 2007. (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 2–3, 6)

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[309] Unauthorized technical assistance provided to the Islamic Republic by Russian nuclear experts and institutes played an important role in the Iranian projects to construct the Arak heavy water production plant and the Arak heavy water research reactor. In spite of the December 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement, which had placed a ban on Russian–Iranian nuclear cooperation outside the Bushehr project, individual Russian nuclear experts and institutes, especially since the late 1990s, had continued to provide highly valuable technical assistance to Iran's nuclear activities in a number of areas. (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 13)

[310] Heavy water reactors – which use natural or non-enriched uranium as fuel – can produce significant amounts of plutonium. According to one estimate, a power plant such as the IR-40 could produce 8–10 kilograms of plutonium each year, enough for one or two nuclear weapons (Bowen and Kidd 2004: 261).

Isfahan acted as the site for yet another Iranian nuclear facility, namely for the uranium conversion plant which president Khatami had referred to in his 9 February 2003 speech. The purpose of the almost finished conversion facility – which had been officially declared to the IAEA already in the summer of 2000 – was to transform uranium ore concentrate into uranium dioxide, uranium tetrafluoride, and in particular, into uranium hexafluoride.[311] In the course of the IAEA's February 2003 visit to Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed that they had designed the facility without having operated any laboratory or pilot facilities using nuclear material to test the most difficult conversion processes, including the production of uranium hexafluoride. Doubtful of the accuracy of the Iranian claim, the IAEA posed additional questions to the Iranians on the matter and continued to investigate it.[312] (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 5–6 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

There were two other major questions related to Iran's nuclear fuel-cycle efforts that called for additional questioning and investigations on the part of the IAEA. For one thing, in 2003, the Islamic Republic acknowledged for the first time that it had a substantial research and development program on lasers. According to the Iranians, however, their laser program did not include any activities related to uranium enrichment. For another, in April 2003, Iranian authorities informed the IAEA that some of the uranium dioxide imported from China in 1991 had been used in experiments involving the production and irradiation of natural uranium targets. This information, combined with previous Iranian statements suggesting that the Islamic Republic was interested in the capability to reuse nuclear fuel from power reactors, gave rise to the concern that Iran was conducting research on plutonium separation. (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 5 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003a and 2003b)

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[311] The construction of the Isfahan uranium conversion facility had started in 1999. According to Iran, the plant had originally been based on a design provided by a foreign supplier – that is, China – in the mid-1990s. However, in 1997, due to strong U.S. pressure, China had cancelled its contract to build the Isfahan plant. Still, the Chinese had reportedly agreed to provide the Iranians with the blueprints needed for the facility's construction. Subsequently, Iranian officials confirmed the receipt of the blueprints to the IAEA, but they also maintained that all the parts and the equipment for the plant had been manufactured domestically based on detailed designs developed without outside assistance. (GOV/2003/75, 2003, Annex 1: 1 and Gill 1998)

[312] IAEA experts' doubts over the accuracy of the Iranian claim stemmed from the fact that, normally, states first validate uranium conversion processes and carry out pilot scale production before proceeding to the final design and construction of a commercial conversion plant (GOV/2003/75, 2003, Annex 1: 1).

The June 2003 meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors

At the time of the publication of the IAEA director-general's June 2003 report on Iran, then, there were still many open questions about the content and purpose of the Islamic Republic's nuclear fuel cycle efforts. But even though the IAEA's work on Iran in the first half of 2003 had focused first and foremost on putting an investigation process in motion, by June 2003, the agency – whose inspectors, as mentioned above, had theretofore never found any of the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities to be in violation of its safeguards agreement – had been able to draw one definite conclusion about Iran's implementation of the agreement. As stated in the IAEA director-general's June 2003 report, by not informing the IAEA of its 1991 nuclear material imports from China, of the subsequent processing and use of those materials, as well as of the facilities where the materials were stored and processed, the Islamic Republic had "failed to meet its obligations" under its safeguards agreement. Even though the quantities of the nuclear materials in question had not been large, and although they would need further processing before being usable for military purposes, the director-general's report noted, Iran's reporting failures were "a matter of concern."[313] (GOV/2003/40, 2003: 7)

In its statement of 19 June 2003, the 35-member IAEA board of governors shared the concern expressed by the director-general over the Islamic Republic's failure to report nuclear materials, facilities, and activities as required by its safeguards obligations, as well as underscored the importance of resolving all the open questions concerning the Iranian nuclear program. The board called on Iran to rectify all the safeguards problems identified in the director-general's report, to cooperate fully with IAEA inspectors in their on-going work on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, and to grant them "all access deemed necessary by the Agency in order to create the necessary confidence in the international community." Specifically, the board asked Iranian authorities to allow

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[313] In their letter of 26 February 2003 to the IAEA, Iranian authorities had stated that they had thought that the Islamic Republic had been under no obligation to declare the natural uranium shipment from China because the total amount of the nuclear materials imported had not exceeded one effective kilogram. As noted by the IAEA, however, the Iranian interpretation had based on an incorrect reading of the country's safeguards agreement. (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 4). Iranian officials sought to downplay the relevance of their reporting failures by noting that IAEA member states' safeguards declarations to the agency were regularly tinged with minor deficiencies. Using the agency's safeguards implementation report of 2002 as an example, the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative said that the report clearly showed that "hardly any Member State can claim to be impeccable." What really mattered, the Iranian representative underscored, was to see whether a member state was prepared to rectify its possible failures. (Salehi 2003b: 3)

environmental sampling at the Kalaye Electric Company, encouraged the Islamic Republic not to introduce nuclear material into the pilot enrichment plant at Natanz, as well as urged Iran to "promptly and unconditionally conclude and implement an additional protocol to its Safeguards Agreement." In addition, the board asked the director-general to provide a follow-up report on Iran whenever appropriate. (*IAEA Media Advisory 2003/72*, 2003)

While being an amalgam of the various diplomatic positions taken by the individual members of the board of governors, the board's June 2003 statement was strongly influenced by the major powers' views about the case. Generally, the statement suggested that the major powers' attitudes towards Iran had approached each other. On the one hand, the United States, fully occupied with its invasion of Iraq, had made it known that it favoured a diplomatic solution to the Iran affair and supported the IAEA's central role in the matter.[314] On the other hand, EU states, Japan, and Russia – countries that had traditionally regarded U.S. assessments of the scope of Iran's nuclear program and of its nuclear intentions as too alarmist – had hardened their stance vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic by strictly emphasizing that the onus for proving that Iran was observing its NPT commitments was on the Iranians themselves. They had also requested the Islamic Republic to provide credible assurances regarding the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities without any preconditions.[315]

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[314] The U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, for example, stated in mid-May 2003 that the United States did not plan to take military action to stop the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities. Nonetheless, the United States made it also clear that, as stated by president Bush on 18 June 2003, it would "not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon" in Iran. (*Reuters*, 15 May 2003 and *The New York Times*, 19 June 2003)

[315] Note, for example, EU foreign ministers' statement of 16 June 2003 which called on Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA and to implement urgently and unconditionally the IAEA additional protocol, and which implied that the fate of the on-going talks on a trade and cooperation agreement between the EU and Iran was linked to the resolution of the nuclear issue (Albright and Hinderstein 2003b). It has been argued that the EU adopted a tougher approach to the Iranian nuclear program after the IAEA's February 2003 findings concerning the Islamic Republic's nuclear fuel-cycle activities. In addition, it has been suggested that the Iran case provided a good opportunity for EU countries – and for many others that opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq – to cooperate and warm up their relations with the Americans. (*Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 24 and Shaffer 2003). As far as Russia, Iran's close nuclear partner, was concerned, the new information about the Islamic Republic's nuclear program had reportedly surprised Russian authorities, too. According to Russian officials, Iran had not informed them about its fuel-cycle activities. As a result, Russia had called on the Iranians to sign the IAEA additional protocol and to cooperate with the agency in resolving the unsettled issues related to their nuclear program. Simultaneously, however, the Russians had made it clear that even if the Iranians ultimately refused to accede to the additional protocol, they would not stop the execution of the Bushehr project. Japan, the Islamic Republic's most important export partner, had also called on Iranian authorities to sign the additional protocol and to answer all the questions posed by the IAEA. China, another key international player and trade partner of Iran, had adopted a cautious approach to the issue in order to secure its interests both vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic and the countries that were putting diplomatic pressure on

Nevertheless, despite the shared concern that the Islamic Republic was moving towards obtaining a capability to produce HEU and separated plutonium for weapons purposes, the basic diplomatic gulf between the United States and other major powers regarding how to respond to the Iran issue remained. The Bush administration – convinced that the new information about the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities pointed to the existence of a nuclear weapons program[316] – took the view that the Iranian nuclear problem should be solved by promoting regime change in that country. The call for a regime change based on the Bush administration's belief that a new Iranian regime would not necessarily be interested in nuclear weapons and especially not in using them to threaten the United States or its allies. By isolating the Islamic Republic internationally through unilateral and multilateral diplomatic means, the Americans asserted, the major powers could simultaneously advance the longer-term goal of a regime change in Tehran and the short-term objective of preventing Iran from importing and developing nuclear capabilities. (Shaffer 2003)

In the context of the IAEA, the Bush administration translated its beliefs on Iran into a diplomatic line that sought to argue the agency into declaring that Iran had violated its obligations under the NPT. The purpose of the U.S. effort was to force the board of governors to report, in accordance with article XII of the IAEA statute, a case of non-compliance to the UN Security Council, which could then place the issue on its agenda and, if so decided, authorize sanctions or even military action against the Islamic Republic. Yet, the U.S. diplomatic approach was opposed by the other major powers as well as by the majority of the board members. The countries objecting to the U.S. approach wanted to influence Iran's behaviour by not only putting pressure on it, but also by engaging the Islamic Republic in a diplomatic process that would encourage the Iranians to cooperate with and consent to the wishes of the international community.[317] (*IHT*, 8 May 2003 and *AP*, 9 May 2003)

Iran, but in the end, had lent its support to the board of governors' June 2003 statement. (Albright and Hinderstein 2003a and 2003b and *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 25–26)

[316] The spokesman of the State Department, for example, had stated in December 2002 that the United States believed that the Iranian nuclear program was not peaceful and that the Islamic Republic was actively aiming for a nuclear weapons capability. Similarly, on 28 April 2003, the United States had declared that the Islamic Republic had an alarming, clandestine nuclear weapons program and that the Iranians were "going down the same path of denial and deception that handicapped international inspections in North Korea and Iraq." (*Arms Control Today*, January/February 2003 and *Reuters*, 28 May 2003)

[317] Prior to the IAEA board's June 2003 meeting, the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative had called on the board members not to use "the language of force and threat" in their statement on Iran, arguing that such language would be "futile and not conducive to the final achievement of our common goal." Commenting on the board's Iran statement of 19 June 2003, the head of the AEOI stated the following:

The September 2003 meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors

Following the June 2003 Iran report by the IAEA director-general and the meeting of the board of governors, the agency's inspectors continued their investigations of the Islamic Republic's nuclear fuel-cycle activities. By 26 August 2003, when the director-general published his follow-up report on Iran, they had managed to bring out new information about the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. A significant part of the new data concerned Iran's centrifuge enrichment efforts. In the first place, the IAEA had witnessed that contrary to the request made by the board of governors on 19 June 2003, the Iranians had begun to test centrifuges with nuclear material at the Natanz pilot plant. Six days after the board's request, on 25 June 2003, Iran had introduced uranium hexafluoride into the first centrifuge for the purpose of single machine testing. Then, on 19 August 2003, it had started the testing of a small ten-machine cascade with uranium hexafluoride. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 7)

At the time of the commencement of single machine testing at Natanz, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had still maintained that, prior to that date, no uranium had ever been enriched by them. However, the IAEA had found this Iranian claim increasingly questionable. There were two developments that had significantly contributed to IAEA inspectors' suspicions. For one thing, in June 2003, on the basis of their visit to Iran that month, IAEA officials had concluded that Iran would not have been able to develop enrichment technology to the level seen at Natanz without prior use of uranium hexafluoride for the purpose of centrifuge testing and design optimization.[318] For another, in June 2003, the IAEA had been able to confirm the discovery of HEU particles from its environmental samples taken at the Natanz plant in the spring of 2003.[319] (Ibid.: 6–7)

Despite the IAEA's efforts, in June and early July 2003, to discuss the issue of centrifuge testing as well as the HEU discovery with Iranian authorities, the Islamic Republic had been unwilling to answer the IAEA's questions. In August 2003, however,

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"When we carefully consider the background, the extensive propaganda and many words from the U.S. for the past several months [...] our correctness and the failure of the U.S. is clear." In connection with the IAEA board's June 2003 meeting, the Iranians had expressed their deep gratitude to the members of the NAM for their solidarity and constructive deliberations, as well as for their diplomatic support for the Islamic Republic. (Salehi 2003b: 1, 5 and *IHT*, 20 June 2003)

[318] In the wake of its investigations in Iran in June 2003, the IAEA had also come to the conclusion that the Iranian gas centrifuges at Natanz had been of early European design (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 6).

the Iranians had ultimately agreed to provide their explanations for the IAEA's findings. As for the discovery of HEU, Iranian representatives had maintained that the enriched uranium detected at Natanz had ended up there on the centrifuge components they had obtained from abroad. They had also stressed that the HEU particles could not have originated from Iranian activities, for the Islamic Republic had never conducted any uranium enrichment activities prior to 25 June 2003, not even when testing centrifuges. Relatedly, the Iranians had kept on clinging to the argument that the missing uranium hexafluoride imported from China in 1991 had leaked from the cylinders containing the material. (Ibid.: 2–7)

In addition to presenting its explanation for the discovery of the HEU particles as well as for the matter of centrifuge testing, in August 2003, Iran had also provided new information about its centrifuge enrichment program. The Iranians had told the IAEA that the program had been launched already in 1985 and not in 1997 as previously claimed.[320] During the program's first phase from 1985 until 1997, the Iranians had told, their activities had mainly taken place at AEOI premises in Tehran and included the importation of centrifuge components both by Iranian entities and through foreign intermediaries.[321] During this period, in 1987, the Iranians had added, the Islamic Republic had also received the drawings for its centrifuges from abroad.[322] Yet, Iranian

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[319] The IAEA had relayed the sampling results to the Islamic Republic on 11 June 2003. Later, in August 2003, the IAEA had confirmed to Iran that its inspectors had actually found two types of HEU from the environmental samples taken at Natanz. (Ibid.: 2, 7)

[320] This revelation had also proved wrong the original Iranian assertion that due to international obstacles put in the way of Iranian nuclear technology imports, the Islamic Republic had started its uranium enrichment and heavy water reactor projects at the same time. According to the Iranians' initial explanation, the purpose of the simultaneous launch had been to ensure that at least one of the two projects would turn out to be successful. Iranian officials had claimed that their two-track approach had been "the only natural course that has been pursued by all other countries that have successfully developed their indigenous nuclear technology." Given that, in the end, Iran had achieved a breakthrough in both areas, the officials of the Islamic Republic had explained, their government had made the decision to build both light and heavy water reactors. (Salehi 2003a: 3–4; Aghazadeh 2003a: 11–12 and *Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 4)

[321] Also, in August 2003, Iran had agreed to provide the IAEA with all information about the centrifuge components and other contaminated equipment it had acquired from abroad, including their origin and the locations where they had been stored and used in Iran. Despite the IAEA's conclusion in June 2003 that the Iranian centrifuges were of an early European design, however, the question of the centrifuges' origin had remained open. France, for example, had maintained in May 2003 that the centrifuges were likely of Pakistani origin. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 9 and *Arms Control Today*, September 2003)

[322] As it later turned out, Iran had received the centrifuge components and drawings from the international nuclear smuggling network led by Abdul Qadir Khan, the assumed father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. According to a one-page handwritten document shown to the IAEA by Iran in January 2005, the Khan network's 1987 assistance offer to Iran had included the following elements: a disassembled sample P-1 centrifuge machine, drawing, specifications and calculations for a complete centrifuge plant, and materials for 2,000 P-1 centrifuge machines. In addition, the Iranians told the IAEA that the 1987 offer had also included vacuum and electric drive equipment used in a centrifuge plant and equipment to reduce uranium hexafluoride to metal and cast uranium metal – necessary to fabricate nuclear weapons

officials had pointed out that their country had not received any outside help to put the centrifuges together or to provide assembly-related training. In the course of the program's second phase, from 1997 through 2002, Iran had reportedly concentrated its activities at the Kalaye Electric Company and focused on the assembly and testing of centrifuges.[323] During the program's third phase, from 2002 onwards, the Iranians had moved their research and development activities to Natanz.[324] (Ibid.: 6–7)

On 12 August 2003, after a series of rejections, the Islamic Republic had let the IAEA visit two further Iranian sites, Ramandih and Lashkarabad,[325] which had been suspected of being locations for not just centrifuge enrichment but for laser enrichment as well. The visits to the sites – the names of which had been publicly associated with the Iranian nuclear program in May 2003 by the NCRI – had indicated that the Ramandih site, even if belonging to the AEOI, had mainly been involved in agricultural studies unrelated to nuclear fuel-cycle activities. The Lashkarabad site, in turn, had been identified as a laser testing facility, but the inspectors of the IAEA had not found any enrichment activities being conducted there. Still, the IAEA had asked Iran to confirm that no activities related to uranium laser enrichment had taken place at Lashkarabad or at any other location in the country in the past. Furthermore, the IAEA had asked the Iranians for a permission to take environmental samples at Lashkarabad. (Ibid.: 2–3, 8; *Arms Control Today*, September 2003 and Squassoni 2003: 2)

As far as the Islamic Republic's heavy water reactor program was concerned, on 13 July 2003 the Iranians had told the IAEA that they had opted for the construction of the IR-40 because their prior efforts to import a research reactor suitable for medical and industrial isotope production and for nuclear research and development had failed. In

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components. However, according to Iranian officials, the Islamic Republic had only purchased some of the equipment offered in 1987, such as a set of designs and sample components for the P-1 centrifuge, but not the reduction and casting equipment, which it had not asked for. (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programme* 2005: 46–47). For a general discussion of the Khan network's clients and activities, see Albright and Hinderstein (2005).

[323] After a number of specific requests made by the IAEA, in August 2003 Iran had allowed the agency to take environmental samples at the Kalaye Electric Company. Nonetheless, the Iranians had significantly modified the workshop's premises since the IAEA's first visit there in March 2003. Because of the modifications made at the site, the IAEA had warned that it might not be able to guarantee the accuracy of the samples taken there and the validity of its conclusions about the activities carried out at the site. Rejecting the claim that they had sanitized the workshop rooms before allowing environmental sampling to take place, Iranian officials had said that they had made the modifications in order to transform the workshop from a storage facility into a laboratory. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 2–3, 7 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

[324] Iran had started the construction of the pilot- and industrial-scale centrifuge facilities at Natanz around 2000 (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 14).

[325] The villages of Ramandih and Lashkarabad are located near the city of Hashtgird in the Tehran province of Iran.

order to secure the continuation of such activities and to render the replacement of the old research reactor in Tehran possible, the Iranians had stated, they had not seen any other option than to build a heavy water reactor which could use domestically produced uranium dioxide and zirconium. Iranian officials had also informed the IAEA that the planned Arak reactor based on indigenous design and was now moving from the basic design phase to the detailed design phase. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 8)

On 4 August 2003, Iran had provided the IAEA with additional information about its heavy water reactor program. Contrary to the IAEA's expectations, however, the information had made no mention of hot cells, that is, of facilities which are commonly used in isotope production but which can also be used in the separation of plutonium from spent nuclear reactor fuel. In the wake of the lack of Iranian references to hot cells and recent media reports that claimed that the Islamic Republic had been trying to procure equipment used in hot cells from abroad, the IAEA had asked Iranian officials to "further look into the matter." (Ibid.: 8–9 and *Arms Control Today*, September 2003)

In the summer of 2003, the IAEA had also kept on inquiring into the Islamic Republic's uranium conversion efforts. As a result of the IAEA's investigations, the Iranians had informed the agency, on 19 August 2003, that contrary to their earlier claim that their country had not conducted any conversion-related research and development using nuclear material, Iran had secretly conducted uranium tetrafluoride conversion experiments on a laboratory scale at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center in the early 1990s. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 4, 9 and GOV/2003/75, 2003: 5)

Similarly, in the early 1990s, the Iranians had told the IAEA in July 2003, the Islamic Republic had carried out numerous experiments related to the production of uranium metal. Responding to the IAEA's question of why Iran needed uranium metal, Iranian officials had stated that the uranium metal was intended for the production of a material that shields against radiation in containers storing irradiated nuclear fuel or materials. Also, the Iranians had added, uranium metal experiments had been viewed in their country as a means to gain know-how in nuclear material production. The fact that the Islamic Republic had, on 24 August 2003, finally expressed its readiness to start negotiations with the IAEA for the conclusion of an additional protocol had improved the agency's chances to verify the correctness of Iran's uranium metal claims as well as to investigate the other issues concerning the Islamic Republic's nuclear program that had continued to remain open. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 3, 5; GOV/2003/75, 2003: 5 and Albright and Hinderstein 2003b)

In the light of what IAEA inspectors had learned and found in Iran since June 2003, the agency's director-general concluded in his August 2003 report on Iran that since his previous report, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had intensified their cooperation with the agency by providing increasing amounts of information about their nuclear activities, by allowing access to additional locations in Iran, and by assenting to the IAEA's requests to take environmental samples in the country. Also, the director-general expressed his satisfaction at Iran's decision to begin negotiations on an additional protocol with the agency. Alongside with the positive remarks, however, the director-general's report also pointed out that, at times, Iran had not just been slow and hesitant in providing information and access to the IAEA's inspectors, but that some of the information given by the Iranians had been in contrast to the data previously made available by them. In addition, the director-general stressed that there were still a number of important questions, particularly with regard to the Islamic Republic's centrifuge enrichment efforts, that required resolution. (GOV/2003/63, 2003: 10)

At the IAEA board of governors' meeting in Vienna in September 2003, the members of the board adopted a resolution in which they referred to the director-general's report and stated that the IAEA now had a better, although still an incomplete, picture and understanding of the Iranian nuclear program. While "recognising the basic and inalienable right of all Member States to develop atomic energy for peaceful purpose," the board expressed its "grave concern" that more than one year after the IAEA's initial inquiries to the Islamic Republic about undeclared nuclear activities, the IAEA was still not able to conclude that all nuclear materials in Iran had been declared and submitted to IAEA safeguards and that there were no undeclared nuclear activities in the country. Consequently, the board called on the Iranians to provide accelerated cooperation and full transparency to allow the IAEA to rectify the situation at an early date.[326] (GOV/2003/69, 2003: 1–2)

Although the board acknowledged Iran's decision to start negotiations for the conclusion of an IAEA additional protocol, it noted that such a decision had not met the board's request made in June 2003 that Iran would promptly and unconditionally sign and implement the protocol. Also, the board criticized the Islamic Republic for the slow and incremental provision of information and access to the IAEA, for the "significant and material changes" in some of the Iranian statements made to the IAEA, as well as

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[326] In this connection, the board specifically called on Iran to provide the IAEA with a full history of its uranium enrichment program (GOV/2003/69, 2003: 1).

for the fact that the number of outstanding issues between the two parties had only increased. Furthermore, the board members noted with concern that the IAEA had found two types of HEU from Natanz, that considerable modifications had been made to the premises of the Kalaye Electric Company prior to IAEA inspectors' environmental sampling at the facility in August 2003, and that in spite of the board's June 2003 statement, the Islamic Republic had introduced nuclear material into the Natanz pilot plant. The board reiterated its June 2003 call on Iran not to introduce nuclear material into Natanz and asked the Iranians to suspend all further activities related to uranium enrichment. In addition, the board called on Iranian authorities to suspend all activities related to the production of separated plutonium until the unconcluded matters concerning the Islamic Republic's nuclear program had been resolved and until Iran had applied the provisions of the additional protocol in a satisfactory manner. (Ibid.: 2)

Moreover, the board set a deadline for the Islamic Republic by asking Iran to remedy all the failures related to the implementation of its safeguards agreement by the end of October 2003. The board members also listed a set of actions they hoped Iran would take by then. Most importantly, they requested the Iranians to (a) provide the IAEA with a full declaration of all imported materials and components relevant to the Islamic Republic's centrifuge enrichment program as well as to collaborate with the agency in identifying the sources of origin and the dates of receipt of such imports and the locations where the imports had been stored and used in Iran; (b) grant an unrestricted access, including environmental sampling, for IAEA inspectors to whatever locations they deem necessary for the purposes of verification of the correctness and completeness of the Islamic Republic's declarations; (c) pursue further discussions with the IAEA on the agency's conclusion that Iran could not have developed uranium enrichment technology to the level seen at Natanz without prior process testing on gas centrifuges; and (d) provide complete information regarding the conduct of uranium conversion experiments. Finally, the board requested Iranian authorities to work with the IAEA to "promptly and unconditionally sign, ratify, and fully implement the additional protocol," and, as a confidence-building measure, henceforth act in accordance with the protocol. (Ibid.: 2–3)

Even though the board's September 2003 resolution did not elaborate on the consequences to Iran of its non-compliance with the board's recommendations, the possibility that the Iran dossier would be sent to the UN Security Council and that the

council would decide on political, economic, and possibly even military sanctions against the Islamic Republic acted as an implicit threat to Iranian authorities.[327] As before, prior to the board of governors' September 2003 meeting, the United States had lobbied for a board decision to report the issue to the Security Council.[328] The Bush administration had also declared before the meeting's commencement that the Islamic Republic's conclusion of the additional protocol would not be enough to satisfy U.S. concerns over the Iranian nuclear program.[329] Given the broad opposition to U.S. diplomacy at the IAEA, however, the Americans had ultimately backed the board of governors' resolution of 12 September 2003.[330]

While the strict formulations of the IAEA board's September 2003 resolution testified to the common features of the board members' Iran positions, the difference between the tough diplomatic approach advocated by the Americans and the softer course adopted by the majority of IAEA member states thus continued to color international deliberations on Iran. Given the Bush administration's failure to mobilize wide international support for a position focusing on punitive diplomatic action, and given its unwillingness to alter the course it had adopted, the diplomatic lead in the matter fell increasingly in the hands of other players, in particular Britain, France, and Germany, the leading EU countries that sought to influence Iranian actions through a combination of diplomatic sticks and carrots.

Prior to the September 2003 Board meeting, the EU had clearly stated to Iran that unless the Islamic Republic would dispel the doubts about its nuclear efforts and fully cooperate with the IAEA, the EU would be prepared to suspend the on-going

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[327] The Iranians themselves openly recognized the possibility that the issue would be taken to the Security Council. The Islamic Republic's IAEA representative, for example, had admitted at the end of July 2003 that should Iran not join the additional protocol, there would be a real danger that the IAEA might decide at its September 2003 meeting to refer Iran's case to the UN Security Council. Foreign minister Kharrazi noted at the time of the IAEA board's September 2003 meeting that there was an apparent and deliberate attempt by some to "torpedo the process of cooperation" between Iran and the IAEA and to "remove the agency from the process." (*AFP*, 31 July 2003 and *IHT*, 11 September 2003)

[328] According to the United States, the director-general's report of 26 August 2003 had provided further incriminating evidence of Iran's violations of its safeguards agreement (*Arms Control Today*, September 2003).

[329] Ibid.

[330] The United States' IAEA representative characterized his government's decision as follows: "It is no secret [...] that the United States believes the facts already established would fully justify an immediate finding of non-compliance by Iran with its safeguards violations. We have taken note, however, of the desire of other member states to give Iran a last chance to stop its evasions, and have agreed today to join in the call on Iran to take 'essential and urgent' actions to demonstrate that it has done so" (Brill 2003: 5). Especially NAM countries had made it clear that they were against the referral of the Iranian case to the Security Council. According to them, the matter should be resolved "peacefully" and through "constructive dialogue within the framework of the Agency" (*Statement by the Non-Aligned Movement* 2003a and 2003b).

negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement between the two parties. But along with the pressure put on Iranian authorities, the EU had also offered them concrete benefits in exchange for diplomatic concessions. The letter of early August 2003 sent to Iran by Britain, France, and Germany had served as a prime example of the EU's diplomatic efforts to engage the Islamic Republic. In that letter, the three EU powers had offered Iran the prospect of technology sharing and cooperation if the Islamic Republic stopped its nuclear fuel enrichment program and concluded an IAEA additional protocol.[331] (*AP*, 22 July 2003 and *Reuters*, 19 September 2003)

In his response letter of 18 August 2003, president Khatami had pledged the EU powers that Iran would never divert its civilian nuclear program for military purposes. In addition, he had informed that the Iranians had decided to enter immediate talks on the additional protocol. Still, Khatami's letter had not committed Iran either to the signing or the ratification of the protocol. Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, had given a more strict response to the EU initiative by stating, on 19 August 2003, that outside calls on Iran to give up nuclear technology were unsuitable, unjust, and oppressive. Therefore, the supreme leader declared, his country would never accept such requests. (*Reuters*, 19 September 2003 and Saghafi-Ameri 2004: 2)

The November 2003 meeting of the IAEA board of governors

Eventually, the demands made by the board of governors in September 2003 and the mounting international pressure on the Islamic Republic forced the Iranian leadership to yield to significant diplomatic concessions. At first, in the aftermath of the September 2003 board meeting, however, Iranian officials had expressed their strong disapproval

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[331] The letter sent by the EU trio had reportedly spoken only of technology cooperation in general and not specifically pledged assistance to Iran's nuclear program. The EU subsequently emphasized that the initiative made in August 2003 had not been about offering direct rewards to the Islamic Republic. As pointed out by Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, in late August 2003: "Let me say this openly: no one should expect a reward for signing [the additional protocol]. The issue is not for bargaining; it is a matter of a friend advising another friend, and Iranian authorities are politically mature to hear a friend's advice" (*The New York Times*, 30 August 2003). From the perspective of the Bush administration, however, the EU was effectively appeasing Iran. The Americans had been strongly against the sending of the August 2003 letter, for they had feared that it would separate Europe and America on the Iran issue. Accordingly, the United States had attempted to dissuage Britain, France, and Germany from making the move. As for the Russians, who had also been briefed about the EU letter beforehand, they had reportedly found the letter's wording "too harsh" and approached the Iranians with a letter of their own in which they also called on Iran to abandon its enrichment efforts. (*Reuters*, 19 September 2003 and Ruhani 2005: 6)

of the content of the board's resolution. In particular, the Iranians had rejected the deadline set by the board and viewed it as an affront to Iran's national dignity, for the resolution's "venomous language," the representatives of the Islamic Republic had argued, had gone "beyond the words and spirit of the NPT and the IAEA Statutes, even beyond the provisions of the Additional Protocol." (Salehi 2003d: 4; *AFP*, 28 September 2003 and Aghazadeh 2003b: 1–2)

In the Iranian analysis, the content of the IAEA board's September 2003 resolution had been a product of the United States' aggressive diplomacy. As put by the head of the AEOI, the Americans had resorted to "extreme unilateralism posed under a multilateralist cloak." In addition, the Iranians had complained that the resolution had been "engineered in such a manner to guarantee its non- or half-implementation," suggesting that Iran's fate in the matter had already been sealed in advance. Highly dissatisfied with the resolution, Iranian officials had warned that they might review and scale back their cooperation with the IAEA and even consider withdrawing from the NPT.[332] (Salehi 2003d: 3; Aghazadeh 2003b: 1–2 and *AFP*, 15 September 2003)

Nevertheless, after the initial expressions of frustration, the Iranians had stated that even though their government did not formally accept the board resolution and consider itself bound to the 31 October 2003 deadline set in that document, the Islamic Republic still intended to continue its cooperation with the IAEA.[333] On 1 October 2003, in order to formulate a response to the IAEA board's latest demands, the Iranian leadership had appointed a five-member policy-making team to deal with the situation. The group was composed of foreign minister Kharrazi, defence minister Shamkhani, intelligence minister Yunisi, Hasan Ruhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Ali Akbar Vilayati, the supreme leader's advisor for international affairs. (*AFP*, 15 September 2003; *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 20 and *IRNA*, 1 October 2003)

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[332] Already prior to the IAEA board's September 2003 meeting the Iranians had issued diplomatic warnings. Note, for example, the following statement made by foreign minister Kharrazi: "If the hawks gain the ground and ignore our legitimate rights for peaceful nuclear activities, we will be forced to review the state of play and the current level of cooperation with the IAEA" (*IHT*, 11 September 2003). The Islamic Republic's IAEA delegation, in turn, had voiced its hope that the board's conclusions would reflect the views of all of its members (Salehi 2003d: 1).

[333] As stated by the head of the AEOI at the IAEA on 15 September 2003: "We are here with the message of willingness to find ways and means that would salvage the process and maintain the issue within the framework of the relevant international body, under the direction of the Director General, taking into account the interpretations put forth by the majority of the Board members on the content of the [12 September 2003] resolution" (Aghazadeh 2003b: 2–3).

On 16 October 2003, in the middle of major diplomatic arm wrestling between foreign governments and the Islamic Republic over Iran's response to the 31 October deadline set by the board of governors, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council assured the IAEA's director-general in Tehran that the Islamic Republic would accelerate its cooperation with the agency and, to that end, promptly provide the IAEA with information and clarifications on all outstanding questions regarding the Iranian nuclear program. According to Hasan Ruhani, a decision had been taken by the Islamic Republic to hand over a full disclosure of Iran's present and past nuclear activities to the IAEA. In addition, Ruhani informed the director-general that the Islamic Republic was now ready to conclude the additional protocol, and pending that document's entry into force, act in accordance with it and with a policy of full transparency. (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 3–4)

Five days later, after a crisis meeting with the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany in Tehran, Iran – which viewed cooperation with the EU as a means to ensure that it would not be referred to the UN Security Council at the IAEA Board of Governors' November 2003 meeting[334] – confirmed, in the so-called Tehran Declaration of 21 October 2003, the pledges made to the IAEA director-general and further announced that it had "decided voluntarily to suspend all uranium enrichment and processing activities as defined by the IAEA."[335] In exchange, the three EU powers recognized Iran's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and stated that the additional protocol was "in no way intended to undermine the sovereignty, national dignity or national security of its state parties." Moreover, they expressed their belief that should Iran fully implement its commitments, the board of governors should be able to find a solution to the "immediate situation" in the Iran–IAEA crisis,[336] and once international concerns related to Iranian nuclear activities would be fully resolved, "Iran

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[334] Hasan Ruhani, the Islamic Republic's main nuclear negotiator at the time, later described Iran's talks with the EU trio as follows: "My basic discussion with the three European ministers was that if we presented a full picture of our nuclear program [...] what would the Americans do, given that the Americans insist on taking us to the UN Security Council? If they were going to promise to resist the American pressure, we thought, we would cooperate. At that meeting, the Europeans promised us that if we presented a complete picture of the country's nuclear activities to the IAEA, as the [IAEA Board of Governors' September 2003] resolution called for, they would resist the American pressure to take us to the UN Security Council and would not allow that to happen" (Ruhani 2005: 8).

[335] According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, their government had decided to make such a voluntary gesture in order to show its good will, to create a new atmosphere of trust, and to develop Iran's relations with Europe and other industrialized countries (*IHT*, 22 October 2003).

[336] This formulation effectively meant that the EU trio would oppose efforts to refer the Islamic Republic to the UN Security Council as long as the Iranians fully implemented their commitments under the Tehran agreement (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 20).

could expect easier access to modern technology and supplies in a range of areas." Finally, the foreign ministers of the three EU powers expressed their intent to cooperate with the Iranians in the promotion of security and stability in the Middle East, including in the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other WMD in the region. (*Reuters*, 21 October 2003)

Following the Tehran Declaration, on 23 October 2003, the Islamic Republic provided the IAEA with a documented declaration of its nuclear program which, Iranian officials assured, presented a comprehesive and accurate picture of the Islamic Republic's past and on-going nuclear activities.[337] The documents indicated that contrary to the earlier Iranian claim that the Islamic Republic had not conducted any uranium enrichment activities prior to 25 June 2003, the Iranians had in fact carried out centrifuge tests using uranium hexafluoride at the Kalaye Electric Company in 1999 and 2002.[338] The uranium hexafluoride used in those tests had been among the nuclear materials imported from China in 1991 and indeed the same missing uranium hexafluoride that IAEA inspectors had shown interest in for months and the Iranians had claimed to have leaked from the cylinders containing the gas. (*IAEA Media Advisory 2003/2310*, 2003 and GOV/2003/75, 2003: 6)

Prior to Iran's handing over of the declaration of its nuclear activities to the IAEA, on 16 September 2003, the agency had informed Iranian authorities that it had found particles of HEU and low-enriched uranium from the environmental samples taken at the Kalaye site in August 2003 which were not consistent with the nuclear material in Iran's declared inventory. The Iranians responded to the IAEA's findings in November 2003 by stating that all nuclear materials in the country had been declared to the agency and that Iran had never enriched uranium to the level of HEU.[339] Therefore, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, the only possible explanation for the HEU finding at the Kalaye site was that the particles had ended up there on contaminated centrifuge equipment obtained from abroad. This continued to be the Iranian explanation for the

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[337] According to the head of the AEOI, Iran handed over the documents to the IAEA in order to remove any ambiguities and doubts about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities and in order to commence a new phase of confidence and cooperation in the nuclear field at the international level. He also said that the Islamic Republic was prepared to provide any additional clarifications that the IAEA would deem necessary. (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 4)

[338] According to Iran, it successfully started uranium hexafluoride tests with a single centrifuge in 1999 and three years later, in 2002, fed nuclear material into 19 connected centrifuges (GOV/2004/83, 2004: 6).

[339] Iranian authorities maintained that they had never used their centrifuges to enrich uranium beyond 1.2 % concentrations of U-235 (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 7).

earlier HEU finding at Natanz as well.[340] Similarly, Iranian authorities continued to claim that they were not aware of the original sources of their centrifuge-related imports. According to the Iranians, the Islamic Republic had obtained its centrifuge drawings and components through middlemen and did not know the initial sources of the imported items.[341] (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 3, 7 and Albright and Hinderstein 2004)

In its declaration of 23 October 2003 to the IAEA, the Islamic Republic had also revealed that it had pursued a secret laser enrichment program in the period of 1991–2000, in the course of which it had used 30 kilograms of uranium metal not previously declared to the agency.[342] As stated in the declaration, the laser enrichment activities had been conducted between October 2002 and January 2003.[343] Furthermore, the Iranians had acknowledged that, starting in the mid-1970s, their country had had laser enrichment-related contacts with foreign entities from four different states. According to the authorities of the Islamic Republic, however, all equipment related to laser enrichment had been dismantled and transferred, together with the uranium metal used in the enrichment activities, from Lashkarabad to a storage facility in Karaj in May 2003. (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 4, 7–8)

As far as Iran's activities in the area of uranium conversion were concerned, on 9 October 2003, the Islamic Republic had provided the IAEA with new information about its research on uranium conversion processes. The information showed that in contrast to earlier Iranian statements, the Islamic Republic's uranium conversion experiments – reportedly carried out between 1981 and 1993 – had in fact involved the production in laboratory and bench scale experiments of practically all the materials important to uranium conversion. In conducting their tests, the Iranians had used nuclear materials that had been imported in 1977 and in 1982 – some of which had been exempted from IAEA safeguards – as well as safeguarded nuclear material which had been declared to

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[340] On 5 October 2003, the IAEA had visited three locations at an industrial complex in Kulahduz in Tehran. The sites had been linked to uranium enrichment activities by the NCRI in July 2003. During its inspections, the IAEA had not seen any work carried out at the sites that could have directly been linked to uranium enrichment. Still, the agency had taken environmental samples at the locations. Subsequently, the IAEA informed that the results of the samples had not revealed any indications of activities involving the use of nuclear material. (Squassoni 2003: 2 and GOV/2004/83, 2004: 21)

[341] In late November 2003, the IAEA director-general stated that five European and Asian countries had supplied Iran with centrifuge components and that the agency would further investigate the matter and discuss it with the countries in question (*Arms Control Today*, January/February 2004).

[342] The Iranians had thus admitted that contrary to their initial claim, the uranium metal in their possession had not been intended for the production of shielding material and the promotion of nuclear know-how alone, but for use in their country's laser enrichment efforts as well (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 5).

the agency as a process loss. Also, the Iranians had made use of the materials that had been imported from China in 1991. On 1 November 2003, Iranian authorities told the IAEA that they had terminated domestic research and development on uranium tetrafluoride and uranium hexafluoride in 1993 because a foreign supplier – that is, China – had been involved in the design and construction of the Isfahan uranium conversion facility at the time. They also stated that the facilities used in those experiments had been dismantled and moved to a waste storage in Karaj. (Ibid.: 3, 5 and GOV/2003/75, 2003, Annex 1: 1–2)

The Islamic Republic's admission that it had extracted small quantities of plutonium in a hot cell at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center between 1988 and 1992 had constituted another major disclosure of Iran's declaration of 23 October 2003 to the IAEA. As explained by Iranian authorities, the purpose of the laboratory scale plutonium separation experiments had been to learn about the nuclear fuel-cycle and to gain experience in reprocessing chemistry. According to the Iranians, their experiments had involved the use of a total of seven kilograms of depleted uranium dioxide targets, of which three kilograms had been irradiated and processed to separate plutonium.[344] (GOV/2003/75, 2003, Annex 1: 5)

On 10 November 2003, the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative provided the agency with a letter in which Iran conveyed its acceptance of an IAEA additional protocol based on the agency's model additional protocol.[345] On the same day, the Islamic Republic informed the IAEA director-general that it had decided to suspend, with effect from 10 November 2003, all activities related to uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. Specifically, Iran stated that it would suspend all activities at the Natanz site, not produce feed material for enrichment processes, and not import any enrichment-related items. (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 4)

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[343] Later, during an IAEA visit to Iran between 27 October and 1 November 2003, Iranian officials informed the agency that a pilot plant for laser enrichment had been established at the Lashkarabad laser laboratory in 2000 (ibid.: 7).

[344] Subsequently, the representatives of the Islamic Republic sought to downplay the importance of the information about Iran's plutonium separation activities. President Khatami, for example, maintained that Iran had used the plutonium for manufacturing pharmaceuticals and that the experts of the IAEA themselves well knew that such a negligible amount of plutonium could not be used for making a nuclear bomb (*Reuters*, 12 November 2003 and *IRNA*, 12 November 2003).

[345] On the eve of the IAEA board's November 2003 meeting, however, Iran's representatives tried to use the protocol issue as a diplomatic trump card by stating that the Islamic Republic would not sign the protocol until there was an agreement on how strongly Iran would be condemned for its past nuclear actions by the board of governors (*IHT*, 21 November 2003). In the end, Iran signed the additional protocol on 18 December 2003.

While the Islamic Republic's diplomatic concessions and its increased nuclear transparency were welcomed by the international community, the new information about its nuclear program did not lessen the worries about Iran's nuclear intentions. Such concerns were sustained, above all, by the revelation that the Islamic Republic had been secretly developing a uranium centrifuge enrichment program for 18 years and a laser enrichment program for 12 years, as well as by the fact that Iran had managed to clandestinely enrich uranium and separate plutonium.

That the Islamic Republic had taken a major step towards developing the capacity for large-scale production of fissile materials was recognized, among others, by the director-general of the IAEA whose report of 10 November 2003 on Iran contained the following observation: "Iran's nuclear programme, as the Agency currently understands it, consists of a practically complete front end of a nuclear fuel cycle, including uranium mining and milling, conversion, enrichment, fuel fabrication, heavy water production, a light water reactor, a heavy water research reactor and associated research and development facilities" (ibid.: 8).[346]

While pointing to Iran's wide-ranging nuclear infrastructure, however, the director-general also stated that in spite of the Islamic Republic's failure "in a number of instances over an extended period of time to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material and its processing and use, as well as the declaration of facilities where such material has been processed and stored," the IAEA had not theretofore found any evidence suggesting that Iran's nuclear activities had a military purpose.[347] On the other hand, he added that given the Islamic Republic's past efforts to conceal many aspects of its nuclear activities, it would take some time before the agency would be able to conclude the opposite, that is, that Iran's nuclear program was exclusively for peaceful purposes.[348] (Ibid.: 9–10)

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[346] Activities related to the nuclear fuel-cycle are generally divided into so-called front-end and back-end steps. The mining and milling of uranium, together with uranium conversion, uranium enrichment, and the fabrication of nuclear fuel make up the front-end of the nuclear fuel-cycle. Steps such as the temporary storage, reprocessing and recycling of spent nuclear fuel constitute the back-end of the nuclear fuel-cycle.

[347] For a detailed listing of Iran's breaches of its safeguards agreement with the IAEA as identified by the agency in the period between the issuance of the director-general's Iran reports of 26 August 2003 and 10 November 2003, see GOV/2003/75 (2003: 9).

[348] Iranian officials generally characterized the IAEA director-general's November 2003 report as satisfactory. In the view of president Khatami and foreign minister Kharrazi, for example, the report testified to the fact that the Islamic Republic did not have a nuclear weapons program and that Iran had been transparent in its dealings with the IAEA (*Reuters*, 12 November 2003 and *IRNA*, 12 November 2003).

For their part, then, the conclusions presented by the director-general in November 2003 illustrated that the IAEA was still far from being able to close the Iran dossier. The continuous need to find out whether the Islamic Republic was telling the truth about its nuclear efforts and whether there were nuclear activities in Iran of which the IAEA had not been informed in the first place led the agency's board of governors to adopt, on 26 November 2003, a tough-worded resolution on Iran. In that resolution, the board strongly deplored the Islamic Republic's past failures and breaches of its obligation to comply with the provisions of its safeguards agreement. Specifically, the board members expressed their grave concern over the fact that Iran had enriched uranium and separated plutonium in undeclared facilities.[349] (GOV/2003/81, 2003: 2–3)

The board of governors urged the Islamic Republic to adhere strictly to its safeguards obligations in both letter and spirit and called on Iran to take all necessary corrective measures to urgently rectify its past actions and omissions. The board also called on the Iranians to pursue a policy of transparency and openness and to fully cooperate with the IAEA in order to enable the agency to conclude its work on the matter.[350] Should any further "serious Iranian failures" come to light, the board warned, it would immediately meet to consider "all options at its disposal, in accordance with the IAEA Statute and Iran's safeguards agreement." While this threat formulation in the board's resolution of November 2003 was vaguely expressed and left room for various interpretations, it did imply that further "serious failures" – a definition open to interpretation itself – would bring the Islamic Republic before the UN Security Council.[351] (Ibid.: 3; Persbo 2003 and *Financial Times*, 27 November 2003)

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[349] On the balancing side, the board's resolution welcomed the Islamic Republic's assurances of cooperation and full transparency, its voluntary decision to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, as well as Iran's decision to conclude an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement. The board also explicitly recognized "the inalienable right of States to the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, including the production of electric power, with due consideration for the needs of developing countries." (GOV/2003/81, 2003: 1–3)

[350] Relatedly, the board members considered it essential that the Islamic Republic's declaration of 23 October 2003 to the IAEA would provide a correct, complete, and final picture of Iran's past and present nuclear activities (GOV/2003/81, 2003: 3).

[351] Iran dismissed the board resolution's operative paragraph 8 which included the threat formulation by stating that the paragraph had no value and contained nothing new. According to the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, "the U.S. tried to include a clause in the resolution which would have allowed Iran's nuclear dossier to be referred to the Security Council automatically, but we announced that it was a violation of the Tehran Declaration and it didn't happen." Indeed, prior to the IAEA board's November 2003 meeting, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had put heavy pressure on Britain, France, and Germany not to include a reference to the Security Council in the board's resolution. Subsequently, Iranian officials characterized the board of governors' November 2003 resolution as a diplomatic victory for their country and as yet another expression of the fact that "Iran has followed its peaceful nuclear activities with transparency and truthfulness and that despite all the fuss made by some arrogant circles it was not trying to produce and obtain nuclear arms." At the same time, however, they

In essence, the content of the board of governors' November 2003 resolution was a compromise between the positions of the United States and the EU trio of Britain, France, and Germany which had drafted the board resolution and taken the diplomatic lead in the Iran question. As before, the United States, convinced that the Islamic Republic had a nuclear weapons program,[352] had called for a board decision referring the Iran dossier to the UN Security Council. After having recognized that the European powers, following the diplomatic commitment made to Iran in the October 2003 Tehran declaration, would not agree to such a course of action, the Americans – together with the other board members who had supported the U.S. position, including Japan, Canada, and Australia – had lobbied for a strongly worded resolution and for the inclusion in the document of a trigger mechanism that would result in some kind of penalties should the Iranians eventually choose to ignore the board's wishes and recommendations. As demonstrated by the final text of the November 2003 resolution, the Europeans had ultimately given in to such demands, even though they had succeeded in rejecting the U.S. proposal according to which the identification of "serious Iranian failures" would have prompted the board to automatically report the matter to the Security Council. (*Arms Control Today*, December 2003; *Financial Times*, 26 November 2003 and *Reuters*, 26 November 2003)

All in all, then, the board of governors' November 2003 resolution maintained the IAEA's central role in the international efforts to find a solution to the Iranian nuclear problem. At the same time, however, the resolution served as yet another reminder of the differences of opinion between the United States and the other major powers on how to bring the Iran case to a close.

5.3.3.3 Iran's diplomatic response to the Bush administration

In the wake of the fact that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program had become a central theme on the international arms control agenda, the Iranians were forced to step up their long-lived diplomatic efforts to refute the allegations that their nuclear program

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were dissatisfied that the resolution did not include an explicit reference to what the Iranians regarded as the most important conclusion of the IAEA director-general's report of 10 November 2003 on Iran, namely, that there was no evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons program. (Persbo 2003; *BBC*, 26 November 2003 and *The New York Times*, 27 November 2003)

[352] In the opinion of the Bush administration's undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, the conclusion – made by the IAEA director-general in his Iran report of 10 November 2003 –

had a military purpose and to defend their country's right to peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. In doing so, the representatives of the Islamic Republic focused, on the one hand, on dealing with the United States whose policies posed the greatest external threat to Iran's nuclear program and, as many Iranians believed, to the country's national security as well. On the other hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic sought to make their country's declared nuclear policies known to the world and to bring the diplomatic process with the IAEA to an end.

As far as the Americans were concerned, Iranian authorities tried to undermine the credibility of U.S. views and demands on Iran by pointing to what the they characterized as the Bush administration's irrational foreign policy and dismal record in the area of arms control and disarmament.[353] That Iranian officials accused the Americans of a hegemonist, unilateralist, and militarist foreign policy added basically nothing new to the Islamic Republic's traditional argumentation on the United States.[354] However, the latest Iranian characterizations of the United States did reflect an increased Iranian sense of anxiety and concern, for as claimed by Iranian authorities themselves, the Bush administration had placed an unprecedented emphasis on the dangerous traits of American foreign policy.[355]

Strongly objecting to what they called the Bush administration's "aggressive unilateralism," the representatives of the Islamic Republic portrayed their country as an advocate of a world order built on the principle of "comprehensive multilateralism."[356]

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that there was no evidence that the Islamic Republic was actively pursuing nuclear weapons was "simply impossible to believe" (*IHT*, 19 November 2003).

[353] See, for example, the statement issued by Iran's UN mission in New York in early February 2002 which, in the aftermath of president Bush's State of the Union address of 29 January 2002, characterized American foreign policy as "self-centered, unilateral and naive." According to the Iranian statement, the Bush administration's foreign policy was steered by the mentality of militarism and unilateralism as well as by "the logic of might makes right." (*Press Release* 2002a)

[354] The Iranians themselves maintained that the Bush administration's foreign policy did not represent a fundamental departure from that of its predecessors. Foreign minister Kharrazi, for example, argued that since the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy had rested on the notion of "global and hegemonic leadership." The claim, made by the Khatami administration in March 2000, that the United States was waging an "undeclared war" against Iran serves as another example of the unchanging nature of the Islamic Republic's official perception of the United States. (Kharrazi 2002b and *IRNA*, 18 March 2000)

[355] Note, for example, the following statement made by Iran's foreign minister: "[The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001] changed the logic, discourse and language of the U.S. foreign policy. The international outcry against terrorism has been used by the U.S. to justify its military presence overseas, to garner support for military spending in the Congress, to coerce other countries to follow its line, and to grade or categorize other countries according to their adherence to self-fulfilling standards contrary to international norms and regulations" (Kharrazi 2002b).

[356] The conceptual division between "aggressive unilateralism" and "comprehensive multilateralism" was made by foreign minister Kharrazi in a speech he delivered at the New School University in New York in May 2002 (ibid.).

In the Iranian view, the Bush administration's foreign policy not only fought against logic and rationalism – as well as against the rights and interests of other states, for that matter –, but it was also incapable of providing solutions to the numerous international problems that required urgent responses from the state community. U.S. attempts to define its national interests as global ones, together with the Bush government's contempt for international law, Iranian officials argued, made the formulation of such responses much more difficult and undermined international peace and security. For this reason, the Iranians demanded, there was an immediate need for a broad international front that would stand against U.S. policies and defend the cause of multilateralism and law-based international relations. That the Bush administration's foreign policies were criticized by the whole world and even by America's traditional allies, the officials of the Islamic Republic observed, was a promising development in this respect. (Aghazadeh 2003a: 2, 14; Kharrazi 2002b and Salehi 2003a: 1–2)

Ironically, then, Iran's opposition to the Bush administration's foreign policy, which openly aimed at changing many aspects of contemporary international relations, made the Islamic Republic – a long-standing critique of the prevailing international order – a supporter of international status quo. Iran's criticism of the Bush administration's arms control diplomacy merely reinforced such an impression. The Islamic Republic, whose focus had traditionally been on international arms control arrangements' deficiencies and discriminatory features, now represented itself as a staunch defender of those instruments and vigorously blamed the U.S. government for undermining them.

Hence, in addition to pointing out that it was the Americans who had blocked the finalization of the BTWC Protocol, prevented the Fifth BTWC Review Conference from achieving any results, and systematically attempted to weaken the CWC and the OPCW,[357] the Iranians accused the Bush administration of undercutting international nuclear arms control efforts. On the one hand, Iranian authorities claimed that the credibility and efficiency of such efforts was eroded by the U.S. policy of allowing certain states to pursue nuclear armaments and overlooking the international community's disapproval of such weapons. As a case in point, Iranian representatives alluded to Israel. While erroneously accusing Iran of nuclear weapon ambitions, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted, the United States continued to ignore Israel's development of nuclear bombs and their delivery systems and even actively supported

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[357] For Iranian references to U.S. diplomacy in the area of biological and chemical disarmament, see ibid.; Aghazadeh (2002: 3) and Salehi (2003a: 2).

the Israeli activities.[358] As another example, the Iranians referred to U.S. silence on India's and Pakistan's nuclear armaments. Instead of calling on the two South Asian states to give up their nuclear arsenals, Iranian representatives complained, the Bush administration had become fixated with Iran's peaceful nuclear activities.[359]

On the other hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed to the Bush administration's own military and diplomatic activities to support the Iranian argument that the Americans pursued a harmful policy of double standard. In addition to actively developing nuclear weapons, the Iranians maintained, the Bush administration totally ignored the obligation, shared by other NWS as well, to get rid of its nuclear weapons arsenal.[360] The representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that even the bilateral nuclear arms control processes of START II and START III had been practically terminated, for the former instrument had not been implemented and the negotiations on the latter had not even begun.[361] Similarly, the Iranians did not forget to regularly point out that the Bush administration had rejected the CTBT.[362]

Iran also strongly criticized the Bush administration's NMD plans. According to the Islamic Republic's authorities, the NMD project was another sign of the United States' dangerous "unipolar vision of the world" and of its effort to shake up the world's military balance for its own benefit. Iran – one of the countries the NMD system was targeted against – rejected the argument that the United States needed a missile defence shield in order to protect itself from attacks by terrorist groups or rogue states and labelled it as a mere excuse that was being used to hide the real motive behind the NMD scheme: the United States' desire to "dominate the world as the sole power." (Soltanieh 2001d: 1; Kharrazi 2002b and *Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* 2001a)

Worried about the U.S. missile defence plans, the representatives of the Islamic Republic warned that such efforts could disturb the already fragile global strategic

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[358] See Zarif (2003a); Salehi (2003d: 3) and A/58/PV.12 (2003: 29).

[359] President Khatami summarized the Islamic Republic's view of being gratuitously subjected to differentiated treatment by the United States as follows: "Currently, the Zionist regime, India and Pakistan, all in our region, have nuclear weapons, but surprisingly, it is Iran that is faced with much ado about nothing in that respect" (*IRNA*, 17 July 2003).

[360] See *Press Release* (2002a); Zamaninia (2003: 2–3) and A/58/PV.12 (2003: 29).

[361] See Nejad-Hosseinian (2002a) and Zamaninia (2003: 2). What the Iranians did not mention was that, on 24 May 2002, the United States and Russia signed the so-called Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) which obliges the parties to reduce the number of their strategic nuclear warheads to 1,700–2,200 each by 31 December 2012. The reason for Iran's silence on SORT and the Islamic Republic's focus on the START II and START III processes – which were effectively replaced by the new U.S.-Russian treaty – presumably stemmed for the fact that SORT freed the Americans and the Russians from some of the arms control obligations that had been codified in START II and planned for START III. For a discussion of SORT, see Holum (2002).

balance and potentially trigger a nuclear arms race as other nuclear powers might seek to offset the U.S. missile defence advantage by increasing the number and sophistication of their nuclear weapons. The Iranians argued that such a development, combined with the possibility that other states could launch and speed up their own missile defence programs, would be disastrous for global peace and security and put international arms control efforts in serious jeopardy.[363] (*Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* 2001b; CD/PV.907, 2002: 27 and Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a)

Consequently, by underscoring the importance of the 1972 ABM Treaty which, in the Iranian view, had served as the "cornerstone of the global strategic stability,"[364] the Islamic Republic – which had always expressed its objection to military doctrines that rely on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons – now basically called for the maintenance of a stable constellation of nuclear deterrence between the major nuclear powers. The eventual announcement by the United States that it would withdraw from the ABM Treaty sparked a strong Iranian condemnation. The unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the treaty, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, showed once again that the Bush administration paid no heed to the will of the international community or to the considerations of global security. (Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a; Kharrazi 2002b and Salehi 2003a: 2)

Iran also vehemently condemned the Bush administration's doctrinal formulations in the area of security policy. One of the manifestations of the so-called Bush doctrine was the Bush government's Nuclear Posture Review which, the Islamic Republic argued, marked a change in U.S. attitude towards the use of nuclear weapons. According to the Iranians, the document not only prescribed the production and testing of new types of nuclear armaments, as well as the improvement of the existing U.S. nuclear arsenal, but it also critically lowered the threshold of nuclear weapons use by letting it be known

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[362] See Aghazadeh (2002: 3); Salehi (2003a: 2) and Zamaninia (2003: 1).

[363] While Iran's discussion of the United States' NMD plans focused on the missile defence system's international implications, the officials of the Islamic Republic believed that the U.S. program would have regional ramifications as well. By sharing its NMD know-how with Israel, the Iranians warned, the United States would directly contribute to the improvement of Israel's missile defence activities, and thereby, help to bolster Israel's military capabilities (Ehteshami 2000b: 174–175).

[364] Iran had strongly defended the ABM Treaty already during the era of the U.S. administration of president Clinton. Note, for example, the Islamic Republic's statement at the UN General Assembly's First Committee in October 1999 which had characterized the treaty as "one of the main foundations of global security," as an "essential element in maintaining stability and a global geostrategic balance" (A/C.1/54/PV.24, 1999: 7). For other Iranian ABM- and NMD-related remarks made during the Clinton presidency, see Kharrazi (2000); A/55/116/Add.1 (2000) and *IRNA* (21 May 2000).

that the United States retained itself the option of using such arms in conflicts against non-nuclear states. (Kharrazi 2002a; Kharrazi 2002b and Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a)

Furthermore, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that by broadening the role of nuclear arms in U.S. military planning and by transforming the role of those weapons from deterrents into operational weapons potentially employed in the battlefield against nuclear and non-nuclear states alike, the Bush administration had dramatically undermined international peace and security and put the arms control achievements of the international community at risk.[365] The reiteration of the Nuclear Posture Review's content in the U.S. National Security Strategy of September 2002, together with the Bush doctrine's emphasis on the military concepts preemption and prevention, the Iranians added, made the existing situation all the more alarming. (Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a; CD/PV.900, 2002: 9–10 and Zamaninia 2003: 2)

Even though Iranian officials – whose country was one of the seven states explicitly mentioned in the Nuclear Posture Review as potential targets of U.S. nuclear weapons[366] – insisted that they did not consider a U.S. nuclear attack against the Islamic Republic a topical threat, they maintained that the Bush administration's nuclear policies had alarmed the whole international community and non-nuclear-weapon states, in particular. In order to counter what they regarded as U.S. rejection of its legal and political arms control commitments, the Iranians repeated their long-standing call for the conclusion of a legally binding international treaty on NSA. (*IHT*, 11 March 2002; Kharrazi 2002b and CD/PV.900, 2002: 9–11)

But even if the officials of the Islamic Republic considered the possibility of a nuclear strike on their country as remote, they did not rule out the prospect of a conventional U.S. military attack against Iran. Following the January 2002 State of the Union address by president Bush, which placed the Islamic Republic on the "axis of

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[365] According to the Iranians, the Bush government's Nuclear Posture Review gravely violated the U.S. commitments under the NPT. Not only in contravention to article VI of the NPT, Iranian officials stated, the posture review conflicted with the international community's desire for nuclear disarmament. Such a desire, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out, had been expressed in numerous diplomatic documents adopted over the years, for example, by the UN General Assembly and by NPT review conferences, as well as in the July 1996 advisory opinion of the ICJ. Moreover, the Iranians viewed the nuclear posture review as violating the United States' pledges of positive and negative security assurances. Iranian officials alluded specifically to the positive security assurances given by the Americans – together with the Soviet Union and United Kingdom – in 1968 in the form of UN Security Council resolution 255, to the U.S. NSA statement of 1978, as well as to the UN Security Council resolution 984 of April 1995. (Kharrazi 2002a; Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a and CD/PV.900, 2002: 10–11)

[366] It should be noted that Iran had become formally included in the U.S. military nuclear war plan as a key enemy of America already by the mid-1990s. The Islamic Republic had been elevated to the status of

evil,"[367] and particularly following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Iranian decision-makers' uneasiness about America's military intentions vis-à-vis their country increased significantly. Outwardly, Iran's concern over U.S. military intentions manifested itself in the form of diplomatic statements making the case that the United States would never dare to attack the Islamic Republic.[368] On the other hand, some Iranian officials openly expressed the fear that the Bush government would carry out a military operation against the Islamic Republic, either in order to overthrow the ruling Iranian regime or to destroy the country's nuclear facilities.[369]

While declaring that their country was strong enough to deal with the U.S. threat,[370] the Iranians depicted the Bush administration's rhetoric and actions against the Islamic Republic and its nuclear efforts as politically motivated. They claimed that the U.S. opposition to Iran's peaceful nuclear program was a pretext under which the Americans sought to pursue foreign policy objectives that had nothing to do with the nuclear issue itself.[371] As to what those U.S. objectives were, the Iranians offered a number of explanations, most of which alluded to U.S. asprirations in the Middle East. By making

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a potential target of U.S. nuclear forces after the end of the Cold War, during the presidency of George H. W. Bush. (*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July 1995)

[367] The officials of the Islamic Republic naturally strongly rejected the characterization of Iran as an axis of evil country. President Khatami, for example, responded to the Bush administration in the following words: "The axis of evil is where there is bullying [...]. The axis of evil is where people want to impose their demands on the world by acting unilaterally. The axis of evil is where we do not approve of anyone except ourselves" (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 October 2002).

[368] The pronouncements by the Islamic Republic's supreme leader focused on underscoring this point. According to Ayatollah Khamenei, the Americans understood that an attack against a nation which did not fear death and which was composed of a large population of young people would be futile. For these reasons, the Islamic Republic's supreme leader argued, the U.S. government would instead try to "infiltrate our ranks to discourage people and reinforce the currents that go against Islam and the Islamic revolution." (Khamenei 2003 and *IRNA*, 22 November 2003)

[369] Note, for example, the following statement made by president Khatami in April 2003 in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq: "They tell us that Syria is the next target, but according to our reports, Iran could well follow" (cited in Takeyh 2003: 23). According to the commander of the IRGC, the United States constituted a serious threat to Iran. Such an assessment, he said, "based on the official stand of the Islamic system" and had been "approved by the Supreme National Security Council as the official body to decide on state security." Subsequently, Iranian officials admitted that the Islamic Republic had elevated its military forces' level of readiness in 2003 as the diplomatic crisis over the Iranian nuclear program had deepened. (*IRNA*, 11 May 2002, and *Financial Times*, 3 February 2005). With Iran's nuclear facilities in mind, the Khatami administration had, from its inception, continued to promote the long-standing Iranian diplomatic objective of a multilaterally negotiated international convention prohibiting armed attacks or threats of attack on nuclear facilities (A/CN.10/PV.222, 1998: 17; Dehghani 1999a and NPT/CONF.2000/MC.III/WP.10, 2000: 541).

[370] The commander of the naval forces of the IRGC, for example, asserted already in early 2002 that the unity and solidarity of the Iranian people, together with the country's "self-sufficiency in many military fields," ensured the Islamic Republic's ability to successfully defend itself against the Americans (*IRNA*, 22 March 2002).

[371] As stated by the spokesman of Iran's foreign ministry: "By spreading poisonous and worrying rumours, the United States is trying to clear the international climate for furthering its political and economic interests and policy of unilateralism" (*Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* 2003).

a fuss over the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities, Iranian officials asserted, the United States aimed at fuelling regional fears and tensions and using them, among others, to increase its arms sales to the region. Also, the Iranians asserted, their country was being denigrated for the purpose of diverting international attention away from Israel's nuclear arsenal and the threat it continued to pose both regionally and globally.[372]

Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed that the U.S. nuclear accusations against their country testified to the American attempt to use the nuclear issue as a means to pressure Iran to change its position on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. In fact, in the opinion of many Iranian officials, the considerations pertaining to the Israeli–Palestinian context were the most important single factor explaining the U.S. campaign against the Islamic Republic's nuclear plans. Without Iran's criticism of Israel and its objection to the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and without the Islamic Republic's strong support for the Palestinian cause, the Iranians contended, the United States would have never raised such a diplomatic hue and cry against their country's nuclear program.[373]

Still, there were other, alternative Iranian analyses of the motives that made the United States accuse the Islamic Republic of nuclear weapon ambitions. Most of them based on the conclusion that by pointing their fingers at Iran, the Americans sought to undermine and, ultimately, overthrow Iran's Islamic regime. On the one hand, the Iranian argument went, the United States tried to weaken the Islamic Republic by keeping it in a state of scientific and technological "deprivation."[374] On the other hand, the Iranians claimed, the Americans resorted to nuclear weapons allegations in order to legitimize, in advance, the use of military force against the Islamic Republic.[375]

To support the argument that the U.S. approach to the Islamic Republic's nuclear program was driven by political motives and not by a genuine concern over the program

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[372] See author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and *CNN* (12 December 2002).

[373] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with Hassan Mashhadi, 8 July 2002, and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002. The argument that links U.S. opposition to Iran's nuclear program with the issue of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has been made by Iranian scholars as well. Note, for example, the following conclusion drawn by Sariolghalam (2003: 70): "The underlying reality is that no matter what Iran does, unless its alters its attitude towards Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, no fundamental policy change in Washington will occur."

[374] In the words of the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative: "The U.S. intention [...] is to make this deprivation final and eternal" (Salehi 2003d: 3).

[375] This interpretation of U.S. diplomacy was put forward, for example, by president Khatami in July 2003 (*AFP*, 31 July 2003).

itself, Iranian officials pointed to the fact that, during the Shah's era, the Americans had actively supported Iran's nuclear plans. Alluding specifically to a declassified U.S. State Department memorandum from 20 October 1978, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that in the document, the U.S. government had not only encouraged the pro-American Shah to expand Iran's non-oil energy base, but it had also eagerly waited for the conclusion of the planned U.S.-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement as well as for the participation of American companies in Iranian nuclear projects. Moreover, the officials of the Islamic Republic emphasized, the Shah's nuclear program had heavily relied on calculations and recommendations made by U.S. experts in 1974, especially on those of the Stanford Research Institute.[376] (*Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 4; Aghazadeh 2003a: 12 and Salehi 2003a: 4)

That the U.S stances on the Shah's and post-revolutionary Iran's nuclear programs were completely opposite, the representatives of the Islamic Republic bitterly asserted, acted as yet another manifestation of the political double standard in U.S. diplomacy. The Iranians complained that while the Americans had recognized the economic rationale for an Iranian nuclear program during the Shah's rule, the same justification was now being fundamentally questioned by them.[377] And curiously, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, the United States was arguing against its original position at a time when the demand for electricity in Iran was at a much higher level than in the 1970s.[378] To underscore the claim that the U.S. government's opposition to Islamic

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[376] The Iranians also pointed out that neither Germany, France, nor the United Kingdom had challenged Iran's nuclear plans during the Shah's time. As noted by the president of the AEOI, the three European states had uncritically accepted the justifications and the "unrestrained" pace of the Shah's nuclear program, as well as played a major part in the program's execution. It should be noted in this context that when discussing Iran's nuclear efforts under the Shah, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to refrain from making any linkage between the Shah's nuclear activities and his military ambitions. The following statement from 2002 by an AEOI representative came closest to suggesting that the Shah had been pursuing nuclear weapons: "In 1979, the objectives and priorities of the AEOI became subject to thorough and fundamental revision. It underwent a complete reorganization with particular emphasis being placed on peaceful research and development." (Aghazadeh 2003a: 12 and Ghannadi-Maragheh 2002: 1)

[377] Note, for example, the statement made in September 2003 by Iran's IAEA representative who provocatively asked whether his country should follow the policy recommendations made by American energy experts prior to the Iranian revolution or the present-day "non-scientific, politically motivated, biased and interfering type of remarks" of U.S. politicians and diplomats (Salehi 2003a: 4).

[378] See author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002, and *ABC News* (12 March 2003). The point that Iran's current, dramatically higher energy needs were not comparable to those of the pre-revolutionary period was also made by the Iranian scholars who defended their country's right to peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. Take, for example, the following question posed by Sahimi (2003): "Why is it that the U.S. and her allies believed, in the 1970s, that Iran needed nuclear reactors and nuclear energy, when Iran's population was less than half of the present and her oil production was much more than now, but they now argue that Iran does not need nuclear energy?"

Iran's nuclear efforts stemmed solely from political considerations, Iranian authorities welcomed U.S. companies to take part in the construction of their country's nuclear facilities.[379]

But while strongly condemning the U.S. attitude towards the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, Iranian authorities signalled, behind the scenes, their willingness to discuss the nuclear issue face-to-face with the Americans and to resume the informal bilateral talks that had taken place between the two parties following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. As a result of those discussions, which had not touched upon the issue of Iran's nuclear program, the Islamic Republic had, in spite of its declared opposition to the U.S. attack on Afghanistan in October 2001, agreed not to interfere in the war and even promised to cooperate with the Americans in certain, carefully limited areas.[380] Later, in December 2001, after the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, Iran had significantly contributed to the success of the UN-sponsored conference in Bonn dealing with the formation of an interim Afghan government. (Pelletreau 2002; Sick 2003: 90 and Kemp 2004: 8, 11)

By the end of January 2002, however, the Bush administration had adopted a tougher diplomatic line vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic and placed Iran on the infamous axis of evil.[381] In late October 2002, as the international debate on the Islamic Republic's nuclear intentions was gaining momentum, the director-general of the IAEA met president Bush in Washington and reportedly told him of Iran's interest in opening a channel to discuss its nuclear program with the Americans. The director-general offered

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[379] As stated by the spokesman of the Iranian foreign ministry in June 2003: "I do not think America is worried about Iran's nuclear programs. If they are, we invite them to come and participate in these programs and construct the facilities" (*IRNA*, 2 June 2003).

[380] Iranian authorities had, among others, expressed their readiness to help U.S. pilots forced down in Iran or escaping the Afghan territory as well as to participate in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan (Pelletreau 2002).

[381] Pelletreau argues that there were three factors that collectively led the Bush administration to revise its Iran course. The first was the intercept and capture, in January 2002, by Israel of Karine-A, a ship belonging to the Palestinian Authority that was said to have been carrying some 50 tons of weapons and explosives from the Iranian island of Kish to Palestine. According to U.S. intelligence, IRGC forces had been directly involved in the delivery of the armaments originating from Iran. The Islamic Republic's meddling in Afghan affairs was the second contributing factor referred to by Pelletreau, for the Bush administration accused the Islamic Republic of the provision of arms and military training to the forces of the Afghan warlord Ismail Khan. Finally, the Bush government's adoption of a tougher stand on Iran had to do with U.S. intelligence reports which concluded that Iran continued its efforts to acquire WMD. (Pelletreau 2002). Naturally, the authorities of the Islamic Republic denied any involvement in the Karine-A event, in arms transfers to Afghanistan, and in WMD-related activities. As far as the Karine-A affair was concerned, Iranian and Palestinian officials alike denounced the incident as an Israeli plot to influence U.S. policies. According to Iran's defence minister, the whole incident was a "deception," for the Islamic Republic "had no military relations with Arafat" and no Iranian organization had supplied armaments to occupied Palestinian territories. (Sick 2003: 90–91; *Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002, and *IHT*, 25 March 2002)

his help to quietly bring the parties together, but the U.S. president did not warm to the Islamic Republic's diplomatic feeler. (*The Washington Post*, 26 October 2004)

Similarly, the Bush administration dismissed Iran's remarkable diplomatic initiative of May 2003 which called on the two parties to discuss the nuclear issue in the context of a broader bilateral political arrangement, a "grand bargain," aimed at resolving major U.S.-Iranian disagreements and leading to improved relations between the two countries. In its proposal, presented soon after the United States had invaded Iraq and swiftly defeated the armed forces of Saddam Hussein and delivered to Washington by Switzerland's ambassador to Tehran, the Iranian leadership[382] offered to open up its nuclear program to intrusive international inspections in order to alleviate any outside fears of the Islamic Republic's nuclear intentions. Moreover, the Iranians expressed their readiness to sign the IAEA additional protocol and raised the possibility of extensive U.S. participation in the Islamic Republic's nuclear projects as a further guarantee of their peaceful nuclear aspirations. (Parsi 2007: 243–244)

More broadly, in its May 2003 initiative, Iran further agreed to address U.S. concerns over terrorism, to coordinate policy on Iraq, as well as to consider the formal acceptance of a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.[383] In return for their diplomatic concessions, the Iranians asked the United States to lift its sanctions against their country, to recognize Iran's right to full access to nuclear, chemical, and biological materials and technology, to recognize the Islamic Republic's security interests, and to abandon the stated objective of a regime change in Iran.[384] (Parsi 2007: 244–246;

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[382] According to Parsi (2007: 243–244), only a small circle of Iranian decision-makers was aware of and involved in preparing the May 2003 offer. The group consisted of Ayatollah Khamenei, president Khatami, foreign minister Kharrazi, his nephew Sadiq Kharrazi, the Khatami government's ambassador to France and the drafter of the first version of the Iranian proposal, and Javad Zarif, Iran's representative at the United Nations in New York.

[383] Parsi (2007: 250–251, 256) maintains that only a few weeks before Switzerland's ambassador to Iran delivered the Islamic Republic's package proposal to the Bush government, Iranian authorities, in the person of Muhsin Rizai, the former commander of the IRGC, signalled to Israel that Iran was interested in improving relations with the Jewish state. According to Parsi, Rizai implied that if Israel reversed its objection to a U.S–Iranian rapprochement and recognized Iran's role and spheres of influence in the Middle East, the Islamic Republic would moderate its stance on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and avoid confronting or challenging the Jewish state. In the end, Parsi writes, Israel rejected Iran's outreach because it saw it more as a tactical move to improve the Islamic Republic's standing in Washington than as a genuine attempt to improve Iran's relations with the Jewish state.

[384] Already before the start of the war in Iraq in March 2003, Iran's influential former president Rafsanjani had hinted – in an interview published later on 12 April 2003 – at the possibility of Iran restoring ties with the United States after a national referendum (Menashri 2003: 2). By the same token, according to Parsi (2007: 250), the Islamic Republic used its diplomatic representatives in Britain and Sweden to signal to the Americans that it was interested in negotiating a comprehensive political deal with the Bush government.

Washington Report on Middle East Affairs 2004 and *The Washington Post*, 26 October 2004)

In addition to rejecting the Iranian proposal, in May 2003 the Bush administration decided to end its informal exchanges with the Islamic Republic. The immediate reason for the decision was the Bush administration's belief that Iranian authorities were sheltering Al-Qaida terrorists suspected of involvement in suicide bombings carried out in Saudi Arabia on 12 May 2003. Thus, the suspension of U.S.-Iranian exchanges marked an end to 18 months of periodic discussions which had started after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and taken primarily place in Geneva, under the aegis of a UN committee dealing with Afghanistan-related matters. At no stage, however, had the two parties discussed the question of Iran's nuclear program. This was due to president Bush's clear instruction to his representatives that the nuclear issue was off the table. (Sick 2003: 90–91 and *The Washington Post*, 26 October 2004)

5.3.3.4 The Islamic Republic's defence of its nuclear activities

Ruling out the nuclear weapons option

As it started to become clear, from the fall of 2002 onwards, that the Iranian nuclear program was far more advanced than theretofore believed, the Islamic Republic intensified its diplomatic campaign to convince the world of its peaceful nuclear intentions. In substantive terms, however, Iran's defence of its nuclear program did not basically differ from the Islamic Republic's earlier nuclear argumentation. Thus, rather than involving the reappraisal of the premises of Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations, the reinforced Iranian campaign to defend the country's nuclear activities was a formal, tactical reaction to suddenly changed diplomatic circumstances.

The claim that their country was not interested in nuclear armaments and would never embark on a nuclear weapons program continued to constitute the point of departure for Iranian officials' argumentation.[385] Similarly, the reasons given for Iran's objection to nuclear armaments remained the same. According to the authorities of the Islamic

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[385] For the argument that Iran would never pursue nuclear armaments, see *Reuters* (14 December 2002); CD/PV.938 (2003: 11) and A/58/PV.12 (2003: 29). In the Tehran Declaration of 21 October 2003 – issued by the Islamic Republic and the EU trio of Britain, France, and Germany – Iran reaffirmed that nuclear weapons had no place in its defence doctrine and that its nuclear activities had been exclusively in the peaceful domain (*Reuters*, 21 October 2003).

Republic, their country was not trying to acquire nuclear weapons because Islam forbade their use and because the moral beliefs of the Iranian nation made the use of such armaments unimaginable. Having themselves been victims of WMD attacks, the representatives of the Islamic Republic added, the Iranian people understood the dangers of WMD and thereby wanted to ensure that nobody would have to relive their experiences with such armaments. (Aghazadeh 2003b: 1; CD/PV.938, 2003: 11 and A/58/PV.12, 2003: 29)

Furthermore, Iranian officials maintained that irrespective of the religious, ethical, and historical factors that constrained their country's military behaviour, the Islamic Republic would not seek nuclear weapons simply because such weapons and other WMD could not guarantee states' national security. To make their point, the representatives of the Islamic Republic asked, for example, whether the U.S. nuclear arsenal had prevented terrorists from carrying out the attacks of September 11, 2001 or whether Iraq's chemical and biological weapons had stopped the Americans from invading that country in March 2003. (A/58/PV.12, 2003: 29 and Aghazadeh 2003a: 13)

Iranian authorities pointed out that the possession of nuclear armaments would undermine Iran's security because it would have a negative effect on Iran's relations with other countries – especially with its neighbours – and most probably trigger a regional arms race involving WMD. Aside from that, the Iranians added, Iran's possession of nuclear arms would subject the country to increased external politico-military pressure and make it a potential target for a nuclear strike. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, the wisdom and the unity of the Iranian people, combined with their reliance on Islam, alone sufficed to ensure Iran's national security. (Zarif 2003c; *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 18 and Aghazadeh 2003a: 14)

In addition to officially placing no security value on nuclear weapons, the Iranians also rejected the argument that nuclear armaments served as a source of political power and influence. To support their viewpoint, Iranian representatives referred, among others, to the cases of India and Pakistan and noted that the nuclear tests carried out by the two countries in May 1998 had not improved their international standing, but instead, created diplomatic problems for them. In the same vein, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that nuclear weapons had not saved the Soviet Union from dissolution. The real factors that increased states' domestic and international strength and clout, the Iranian argument went, consisted of nations' economic, scientific, and

industrial capabilities. As observed by president Khatami, "being strong means having knowledge and technology." (Farhi 2004: 45; Aghazadeh 2003a: 9–10 and *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 September 2003)

According to Iranian authorities, there were numerous factors that testified to their country's anti-nuclear weapons stance. First of all, they noted that the Islamic Republic was a member of all major international conventions dealing with WMD and that it had always actively sought to promote regional and global nuclear disarmament.[386] Moreover, the Iranians stressed that the Islamic Republic had always worked closely with international organizations involved in arms control and that it had never been found in contravention of its disarmament commitments.[387] And apart from being a staunch advocate of nuclear disarmament, Iranian representatives continued, the Islamic Republic's policy of not responding in kind to Iraq's chemical weapons use during the 1980–1988 war had been another embodiment of Iran's responsible behaviour.[388] Also, the Iranians asked that if their country was pursuing nuclear weapons, why would it have so openly discussed its nuclear program in public and allowed international observers to visit its nuclear facilities?[389] Moreover: would a country working on nuclear arms have invited foreign powers to participate in its nuclear projects and would it have signed the CTBT and agreed to host test-monitoring stations on its soil?[390]

The internal Iranian debate on the Islamic Republic's nuclear policy

In spite of the official Iranian claim that the Islamic Republic would never obtain nuclear arms, however, some Iranian representatives quietly acknowledged that, in theory, their country could, under article X of the NPT, legally withdraw from that treaty and then harness its existing nuclear know-how to serve military purposes.[391] In fact, as the nuclear crisis between Iran and the IAEA deepened, some elements within the Islamic Republic's political elite began to openly call on the Iranian government to do precisely that.

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[386] See Salehi (2003a: 2); *Memorandum from the Ambassador* (2003: 1–2, 6) and A/58/PV.12 (2003: 29).
[387] See Salehi (2003a: 2); *Memorandum from the Ambassador* (2003: 1–2, 6) and CD/PV.938 (2003: 11).
[388] Note, for example, the statement made by Iran's IAEA representative to the agency's board of governors on 8 September 2003: "Iran is a responsible state and has demonstrated that during the imposed war. Despite its retaliatory capabilities, Iran never succumbed to reprisal and therefore never used the appalling chemical weapon" (Salehi 2003c: 2).
[389] See *AFP* (8 August 2002) and *CNN* (13 December 2002).
[390] See author's correspondence with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, November 2002.

The calls for Iran's withdrawal from the NPT became increasingly prevalent in the autumn of 2003 after the IAEA's board of governors had – in its resolution of 12 September 2003 – presented a list of demands to the Islamic Republic and called on Iranian authorities to satisfy them by the end of October 2003. Outraged by the IAEA's ultimatum, some influential Iranian elite figures called on their government to ignore the board's demands and to resist what they regarded as Western efforts to weaken the Islamic Republic. While arguing that the immediate purpose of the diplomatic process between Iran and the IAEA was to force the Islamic Republic to give up its nuclear program, Iranian advocates of a tough, uncompromising diplomatic course claimed that outside powers' efforts would not end there. The ultimate goal of the West, the Iranian elite hardliners maintained, was to topple the country's Islamic regime.[392] (*Financial Times*, 12 September 2004; *IHT*, 8 September 2003 and *Eurasia Insight*, 2 October 2003)

In the opinion of the Iranian hardliners, the IAEA additional protocol was an instrument that was being used in the Western plot against their country. By providing international inspectors with an opportunity to carry out spying operations in Iran and to get their hands on the Islamic Republic's military secrets, the hardliners alleged, the protocol constituted a threat to Iranian national security. After the Islamic Republic had announced, in mid-October 2003, that it would sign the additional protocol, Iranian elite hardliners denounced – also in the form of orchestrated street demonstrations[393] – their government's diplomatic move. Iranian opponents of the instrument portrayed the protocol's acceptance as a disgraceful capitulation to Western demands and urged the Islamic Republic to withdraw from the NPT.[394] (*Reuters*, 19 September 2003; *BBC*, 22 October 2003 and *AP*, 25 October 2003)

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[391] See *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* (2003: 23).

[392] According to the Iranian elite members who warned their government about external powers' intentions vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic, there were plenty of historical evidence to substantiate Western governments' efforts to undermine Iran's Islamic government. The West's blessing of Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980, Western chemical weapons shipments to Saddam Hussein during the 1980–1988 war, and Western governments' acceptance of and involvement in Israel's WMD programs were given by Iran's elite hardliners as recent examples of why they could not trust Western powers. (*Financial Times*, 12 September 2004)

[393] On 24 October 2003, for example, some 1,500 hardline protestors gathered in the streets of Tehran to express their disapproval of the Islamic Republic's nuclear diplomacy (*AP*, 25 October 2003).

[394] Perhaps the most often cited pro-withdrawal statement by a member of the Islamic Republic's ruling elite was the one made by Ayatollah Jannati, the head of the Guardian Council, on 19 September 2003: "What is wrong with considering this treaty on nuclear energy [the NPT] and pulling out of it. North Korea pulled out of it and many countries have never entered it" (*Reuters*, 19 September 2003).

Although the Iranians who objected to their country's acceptance of the IAEA additional protocol could not self-evidently be designated as advocates of an Iranian nuclear weapons capability, many of them did support a national military nuclear program. The views of those elite members of the Islamic Republic who called for an Iranian nuclear weapons capability had first become public knowledge in the Islamic Republic in the aftermath of the Indian-Pakistani nuclear tests of May 1998. Spurred by the South Asian tests, as well as by the Khatami era's atmosphere of heated domestic political debate, the Iranian supporters of a national nuclear weapons program had called on their government to seriously contemplate the weapon option.

In 2003, as Iran found itself in the middle of a diplomatic crisis over its nuclear program, the supporters of the nuclear weapon option voiced their position in an unprecedentedly forceful manner.[395] In the course of what turned out to be the second major round of public nuclear debate in the Islamic Republic, they challenged Iran's official nuclear diplomacy and deliberated on the reasons that purportedly made a military nuclear program a necessity for their country. The factors listed by the bomb enthusiasts were similar to those presented by them in connection with the Iranian nuclear debate of 1998.[396]

On the one hand, the supporters of an Iranian nuclear weapon program argued that the Islamic Republic needed a nuclear deterrent against the threats in its highly unstable security environment, against U.S. machinations, and particularly against the nuclear armaments of Israel, India, and Pakistan. On the other hand, they maintained that nuclear weapons would enhance Iran's political power and influence internationally. Such a view was reinforced by the international community's half-hearted response to India's and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests. That the international criticism of the tests and the sanctions imposed on the two countries turned out to be short-lived were interpreted by some Iranian nuclear bomb advocates as a confirmation to the belief that, eventually, the state community could not diplomatically sideline and ignore a country

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[395] Farhi (2004: 43–44) asserts that no foreign policy question in the Islamic Republic before had become so contentious publicly as the nuclear issue. According to an observation made by an Iranian official in September 2003, the nuclear weapon advocates' views had quickly gathered ground among Iranians (*Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 18). Another Iranian representative observed that even though the nuclear hardliners were in minority in Iran, their voice was "becoming louder as the international pressure is increasing" (*IHT*, 8 September 2003).

[396] See above the relevant passages in section 5.3.1.2. It should be added here that ever since the time of the South Asian nuclear tests of 1998, some of the most ardent supporters of an Iranian nuclear weapons program have come from the country's academia (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official [D] who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002 and *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 18).

that was equipped with nuclear weapons.[397] Finally, the spokesmen for an Iranian nuclear weapons program underscored the value of nuclear armaments as a source of national pride and unity. (*The Washington Post*, 11 March 2003; *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 18 and Farhi 2004: 35–37)

In contrast to the Islamic Republic's hardcore nuclear weapon advocates, some members of the Iranian elite argued that even if actually never completing it, their country should nonetheless launch a nuclear arms program for tactical reasons.[398] Such a program, the argument went, would act as an indispensable diplomatic trump card that could be used for extracting major diplomatic concessions from Western powers. Iranian government's demonstrated readiness to review its nuclear policies in exchange for European and American rewards in the political and economic domain suggested that the logic of a trade-off was widely espoused by the members of the Islamic Republic's political elite. However, what distinguished Iranian supporters of a national nuclear weapons program from those members of the Islamic Republic's political elite who backed Iran's official diplomatic line was the view of the former that only a national nuclear arms program could decisively strengthen the Islamic Republic's bargaining position.[399]

Given that Iran's decisions on how to proceed in the diplomatic crisis with the IAEA would crucially define the state of its future relations with the outside world, it was no wonder that the nuclear issue engendered heated exchanges of words between the Islamic Republic's reformist and hardline forces.[400] And yet, the reformist-hardliner divide that coloured the public nuclear debate in Iran presumably played only a minor role in the formulation of Iran's official reactions to the crisis. This was due, first and foremost, to the fact that it was the Iranian elite's pragmatic conservatives that controlled the Islamic Republic's decision-making machinery in the nuclear matter. The shared preference of the Iranian leadership's pragmatic conservative and reformist

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[397] Note, for example, the following remark made by an Iranian official in September 2003 which subscribed to the interpretation that India's and Pakistan's nuclear weapons had improved those states' international standing: "India and Pakistan have both acquired nuclear weapons, were softly reprimanded, and currently enjoy strong relations with the U.S." (cited in *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 15).

[398] See ibid. (2003: 18).

[399] One important factor that had contributed to the trade-off logic's popularity among the Iranians was the case of North Korea. The fact that the North Koreans had succeeded, since the early 1990s, in using their nuclear program as a diplomatic asset that brought the Americans to the negotiating table had convinced many in Tehran that the Islamic Republic should follow North Korea's example. (Farhi 2001: 49; *The Washington Post*, 11 February 2003 and Takeyh 2003: 23)

[400] For a discussion of such exchanges, see Farhi (2004: 38–49).

forces for a cooperative nuclear diplomacy thus resulted in the nuclear hardliners' marginalization in the intra-elite Iranian debate on the Islamic Republic's nuclear policies.[401]

In fact, the Islamic Republic tried to use Iranian nuclear hardliners' dissatisfaction with their country's nuclear policies as a tool to strengthen its diplomatic position in the international arena. Although the officials of the Islamic Republic made it regularly known that the hardliners' views did not represent Iran's official line, they nevertheless tried to convey the impression that Iranian government's diplomatic latitude was seriously limited by the critical voices within the country.[402] The Islamic Republic's resort to the public opinion card for the purpose of stalling the diplomatic processes dealing with Iran's nuclear program, and most importantly, for the purpose of persuading key international players to soften their demands on Iran became strikingly evident in the fall of 2003. Trying to influence the content of the IAEA board of governors' September 2003 resolution on Iran, the Islamic Republic's representative at the agency warned the board of further "politicizing the technical issue" of Iran's nuclear program. As the authorities of the Islamic Republic were "sitting on a very thin edge" politically, he argued, increased international pressure on Iran could easily produce a strong counterreaction within the country and thereby force the Iranian leadership to cut down its cooperation with the international community.[403] (*IHT*, 22 July 2003; *IHT*, 9 September 2003 and Salehi 2003c: 1–4)

Soon after the issuance of the October 2003 Tehran Declaration, Iranian officials tried to quell the nuclear debate in the country by making it clear that Iran's agreement with Britain, France, and Germany had been approved by the Islamic Republic's highest authorities, including the supreme leader. Defending the arrangement as a victory for

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[401] In spite of their alliance with the pragmatic conservatives in the nuclear issue, however, the reformists of the Iranian elite did not uncritically accept the content of their country's nuclear diplomacy. In the opinion of some reformists, for example, the Islamic Republic's disinclination to seriously collaborate with the IAEA prior to the board of governors' September 2003 resolution had considerably limited Iran's diplomatic latitude and possibly even cost the Iranians the right to independently enrich uranium for their nuclear reactors (*Daily Star*, 1 November 2003).

[402] At times, the officials of the Islamic Republic seemed to suggest that opposition to Iranian government's cooperative nuclear diplomacy was widespread in the Iranian society and that it did not only involve hardline political forces but the general public as well. Take, for example, the call made to IAEA board of governors by the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative on 8 September 2003: "We need your support in maintaining a helpful international climate so that we will be able to convince our public opinion that our course of action is the correct course [...]" (Salehi 2003c: 3).

[403] In a similar manner, Iranian representatives had used the public opinion card when discussing the Iran policy of the United States. If America continued to bring up unjust WMD accusations against the Islamic Republic, the Iranians asserted, their government's arms control diplomacy could take a less cooperative

their country, they stressed that, above all, the deal had prevented the referral of Iran's case to the UN Security Council and thereby probably saved the Islamic Republic from further economic sanctions and diplomatic ostracism. By emphasizing, among others, that the IAEA additional protocol would not give international inspectors an unlimited access to Iranian facilities, the officials of the Islamic Republic also sought to correct Iranian nuclear hardliners' depictions of the protocol's implications. (Farhi 2004: 40–41, 48; *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 16–17 and Pollack and Takeyh 2005)

Iran's stated nuclear plans

Notwithstanding their disagreements over Iran's nuclear activities, the members of the Islamic Republic's political elite were unanimous in their insistence on their country's right to have a full-scale nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Irrespective of whether such a program was ultimately seen by the elite members as a springboard for military nuclear efforts or not, Iranian authorities declared that nothing would make them give up that right, which, the Iranians stressed, also covered nuclear fuel-cycle activities. (*IRNA*, 24 June 2003; *IHT*, 29 September 2003 and *AFP*, 6 October 2003)

Following the Tehran Declaration of October 2003, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that Iran's agreement to suspend all activities related to uranium enrichment and processing was a temporary gesture and that Iran alone would decide how long the suspension would stay in force. The Iranians also strongly rejected the idea that Iran should agree to permanently halt its uranium enrichment activities. Alluding to the Tehran Declaration, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic himself made it known that should the agreement with the EU powers harm Iran's national interests or values, it would not hesitate to terminate the diplomatic process with the Europeans. (Bowen and Kidd 2004: 270; *Asia Times Online*, 9 December 2003 and Eisenstadt 2004: 18)

In order to demonstrate their determination to pursue a comprehensive nuclear power program as well as to get outside support for their nuclear diplomacy, in 2003, Iranian officials regularly met with their Russian counterparts to discuss future nuclear cooperation between the two parties. The construction of a second nuclear reactor at the

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direction (author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials [C] and [D] who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

Bushehr site was a central topic in those discussions.[404] By the same token, Iran and Russia continued their long-lived talks on the terms of a deal under which the Russians would provide nuclear fuel for the Bushehr-1 reactor. But while the Iranians had already agreed to the fundamental Russian negotiating position which required Iran to return the spent fuel back to Russia for reprosessing and storage,[405] disagreements supposedly over financial and technical details kept the deal from being signed. (*Arms Control Today*, January/February 2003; Squassoni 2003: 5 and *BBC*, 26 February 2005)

The construction of a second nuclear reactor at the Bushehr site was part of the Islamic Republic's long-term nuclear plans whose details became public knowledge during 2002 and 2003 as Iranian officials, in an unprecedentedly open manner, discussed them in various diplomatic contexts. Prior to the fall of 2002, the Islamic Republic had said very little about the specifics of its nuclear objectives. In the early 1990s, the Iranians had expressed the hope that, in the future, nuclear energy would account for 10–20 percent of Iran's energy needs. In 1997, at the IAEA, the head of the AEOI had spoken about the Iranian intention to generate 20 percent of the country's electricity by nuclear power plants by the year 2017 (GC/41/OR.2, 1997: 13).

From the autumn of 2002 onwards, however, the authorities of the Islamic Republic started to shed more light on their nuclear goals. As far as nuclear energy's share in Iran's total energy palette was concerned, the Iranian objective was clearly spelled out: by the year 2021, 10 percent of Iran's electricity was to be supplied by nuclear reactors. The stated goal based on a calculation according to which Iran needed an electricity capacity of 70,000 MW by the target year. Iranian authorities thus aimed at a total nuclear power capacity of 7,000 MW. This included the 1,000 MW already accounted for by the Bushehr-1 plant, putting Iran's additional nuclear power needs at 6,000 MW.[406] (Sahimi 2005: 43; Aghazadeh 2003a: 4 and A/58/PV.12, 2003: 29)

The officials of the Islamic Republic emphasized that in order to achieve its nuclear energy goals, their country had to embark on the development of a vast nuclear infrastructure composed not only of nuclear reactors but also of fuel-cycle facilities as

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[404] For the Iranian-Russian nuclear cooperation talks, see *Itar-Tass* (17 February 2003); *IRNA* (11 March 2003) and *AFP* (2 July 2003).

[405] This Russian demand stemmed not only from proliferation concerns but also from financial considerations, for Russia viewed the importation of irradiated fuel as part of the nuclear services it was selling to Iran (Shaffer 2003).

[406] According to some news reports, Iran intended to build altogether six additional nuclear reactors at the Bushehr site. However, the accuracy of such reports was doubtful because the AEOI's vice president for nuclear fuel production, for example, stated in September 2003 that the Iranians were planning to

well as of capabilities related to nuclear safety and nuclear waste management.[407] In regards to the nuclear fuel-cycle activities that had put the Islamic Republic on a collision course with the international community, the Iranians said that they had had no other alternative but to develop an independent means of producing nuclear fuel for their power plants. Reliance on foreign suppliers' fuel, Iranian authorities' argument went, held the risk that political reasons could lead to the cancellation of fuel shipments to the Islamic Republic at any moment.

Seeking to explain why their country could not rely on others and therefore needed to have independent fuel production capabilities, Iranian representatives pointed, above all, to the United States and said that, for years, the Americans had tried to cut off Iran's access to foreign nuclear assistance. In view of the constant pressure put on nuclear fuel suppliers by the United States, the Iranians noted, how could their country put itself at the mercy of political considerations and simultaneously succeed in running a meaningful nuclear program? Iranian authorities pointed out that European countries were among the states that were highly susceptible to U.S. influence and stressed that the Islamic Republic had already had bad experiences with European nuclear suppliers. Referring specifically to Iran's original 1974 Bushehr deal with the Germans, which had included an agreement over the supply of nuclear fuel to Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic complained that their country had not managed to "recover its approximately 100 tons enriched uranium and 390 tons tails uranium currently stored in Lingen, Germany." (*The Washington Post*, 13 March 2003; Aghazadeh 2003a: 11–12 and *Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 4)

Responding to the argument that the Islamic Republic did not need to produce nuclear fuel domestically because it already had a fuel supply agreement with Russia, Iranian officials stressed that the deal concerned only the Bushehr-1 reactor and that Russia had made no other commitment to meet Iran's future nuclear fuel needs. And even in the Bushehr-1 arrangement, the Iranians specified, the Russians had committed themselves to providing supplies only for a limited period of time. According to Iranian representatives, this was yet another reason for their country's attempt to achieve self-

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construct nuclear power plants "in various parts of the country." (*IHT*, 15 August 2003 and Ghannadi-Maragheh 2003: 1)

[407] For official Iranian descriptions of the steps the Islamic Republic had taken to build its nuclear infrastructure, see Aghazadeh (2003a: 4–6); *Memorandum from the Ambassador* (2003: 4–6) and Ghannadi-Maragheh (2003: 1–14). It should be stressed here that these descriptions – which for the most part repeated the developments already discussed above in section 5.3.3.2 – never revealed any details beyond what was already known by the IAEA at a given time.

sufficiency in nuclear fuel production by 2021. (Aghazadeh 2003a: 7–8 and *Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 4)

As noted by some analysts, Iran's objective of establishing self-sufficiency in the production of nuclear fuel did not necessarily make economic sense.[408] Indeed, by claiming that their nuclear fuel-cycle plans were shaped first and foremost by existing political realities, the Iranians themselves seemed to indirectly agree with this conclusion. But when it came to Iran's nuclear program in general, the officials of the Islamic Republic continued to justify it mainly on economic grounds. As before, they stressed that Iran had to meet its rapidly growing electricity needs and that the only prudent way to do so was to rely on nuclear power.[409]

The representatives of the Islamic Republic acknowledged that Iran already possessed enough resources to generate the additional electricity needed in the country. But in the long run, they emphasized, continued reliance on hydrocarbons in electricity production would undermine the welfare of the Iranian people. To make their case, the officials of the Islamic Republic relied on the long-standing Iranian argument that the country had to preserve its oil and gas reserves for export and for processing industries instead of burning those fuels to satisfy domestic electricity needs. Unless the Islamic Republic reexamined its energy policies, they stressed, Iran's future oil export earnings would dramatically fall and the country could end up becoming, within the next few decades, a net importer of crude oil and some of its by-products. According to Iranian authorities' calculations, a nuclear infrastructure covering 10 percent of the country's power needs would annually free some 190 million barrels of oil for export and processing purposes. The economic value of such savings was estimated to amount to over $5 billion per year.[410] (Salehi 2003a: 4–5; Aghazadeh 2003a: 3–5 and *Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 3)

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[408] Albright and Hinderstein (2003a), for example, argue that the Iranians "must recognize that overseas purchase of low-enriched uranium for fuel is more cost effective than domestic production" and add that "indigenous production is made even costlier by the perceived need to produce enriched uranium in heavily fortified underground facilities, which are significantly more expensive to build and operate than aboveground facilities."

[409] According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, between 1977 and 2001, the consumption of electricity produced by fossil fuel plants had grown in Iran at an annual rate of about 8.8 percent, whereas the electricity production rate had registered an annual average growth of about 8.5 percent. During the same period, Iranian officials pointed out, the supply of primary energy in the country had remained at an average growth rate of about 6 percent. Iran's current electricity production capacity was put at above 30,000 MW. (*Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 3 and Salehi 2003a: 4)

[410] When talking about the economic benefits of their nuclear program, the officials of the Islamic Republic also noted that reduced reliance on hydrocarbons in the production of electricity would decrease the amount of subsidies their government was channelling to Iranian fossil fuel consumers (Aghazadeh

In addition to alluding to their responsibility to preserve their country's fossil fuel reserves for future Iranian generations, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that increased utilization of fossil fuels for power generation would have adverse effects on the natural environment. In line with the international community's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Iranian authorities maintained, the Islamic Republic regarded nuclear power as a means to scale down oil consumption's toll on the environment. The Iranians calculated that if their country produced 10 percent of its electricity by nuclear power plants, it would annually prevent the release into the atmosphere of over 157,000 tons of carbon dioxide, 1,150 tons of suspending particles, 130 tons of sulphur, and 50 tons of nitrous oxide. (Ghannadi-Maragheh 2002: 1; Aghazadeh 2003a: 4–5 and *Memorandum from the Ambassador* 2003: 3–4)

The Islamic Republic's statements on its nuclear plans also indicated, once again, that the Iranians viewed their nuclear program as a major milestone in the country's general development. In addition to referring, among others, to agricultural, medical, and industrial applications of nuclear science and technology, the Islamic Republic's authorities believed that the know-how obtained in the context of nuclear projects would have a spill-over effect and lead to progress in other scientific and technological fields as well.[411] In essence, the Iranians equated the mastery of nuclear science and technology with the status of an advanced state and did little to hide their satisfaction with the successes of their nuclear fuel-cycle efforts so far. Iran's capability to enrich uranium, in particular, was a major source of national pride in the country.[412]

From the Iranian point of view, then, the benefits of nuclear power were so manifold that the Islamic Republic could not seriously contemplate the option of not having a nuclear program. Iranian authorities dismissed out of hand the argument that Iran, a country rich with oil and gas, would not need a nuclear program and asked why those who made such a claim did not offer their advice to countries like the United States,

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2003a: 4). In consequence of such subsidies, the price for gasoline and other oil products in Iran had remained very low. In the early 1990s, for example, domestic fuel prices were reportedly held to 10 to 20 percent of international prices. According to one estimate, subsidies on oil products, gas, and electricity cost the Iranian economy annually some $11 billion (Kanovsky 1997: 21 and 1998: 59).

[411] See Ghannadi-Maragheh (2002: 1, 10); *IRNA* (17 July 2003) and *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* (2003: 15).

[412] In August 2003, for example, the Islamic Republic's supreme leader proudly declared that thanks to its Islamic system, Iran had become one of the ten countries in the world that had managed to develop an independent nuclear fuel cycle (Saghafi-Ameri 2004: 2–3). The secretary of the Islamic Republic's Supreme National Security Council, in turn, stated in November 2003 that "uranium enrichment is an important achievement, and it is a source of national pride for us, and we should continue it" (cited in Persbo 2003).

Russia, and the United Kingdom, all rich with hydrocarbons and still possessing massive nuclear infrastructures. And in the end, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted, Iran had already invested so much human and financial resources in its nuclear projects that it was simply too late to consider their cancellation. In order to reassure those worried about their nuclear intentions, Iranian authorities invited all technologically advanced member states of the IAEA to participate in their "ambitious plan for the construction of nuclear power plants and the associated technologies such as the fuel cycle, safety and waste management techniques." (Salehi 2003a: 4; Aghazadeh 2003a: 12–13 and Aghazadeh 2002: 3–4)

As to why the Islamic Republic had pursued many aspects of its nuclear program in secret, Iranian officials stressed that due to Western governments' and particularly the United States' fierce efforts to block Iran's access to nuclear technology, they had not had any other option than to act covertly.[413] In October 2003, when the Iranian government provided the IAEA with a documented declaration of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, it expressed its expectation that the agency would take cognizance of Iran's concerns and constraints with regard to the full disclosure of detailed information about its nuclear activities in the past and notably of the Iranian concern about the "expansion of illegal sanctions to prevent Iran from exercising its inalienable right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes stipulated in article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (GOV/2003/75, 2003: 4).

The call for full access to nuclear transfers

Following the diplomatic footsteps of its predecessor, the Khatami administration forcefully condemned the nuclear export controls targeted against Iran and emphasized

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[413] The Islamic Republic's IAEA representative characterized his country's predicament by stating, in September 2003, that for the past 24 years, Iran's attempts to procure nuclear technology had been "chased rigorously and suppressed violently." And "the hunt," he continued, "goes on unabated today." In the light of the export restrictions applied by Western countries against Iran, the fact that Russia had agreed to cooperate with the Islamic Republic in the nuclear field gave Iranian officials at least partial satisfaction. In December 2000, in connection with the visit of Russia's defence minister in Tehran, for example, the Islamic Republic's defence minister had declared that the visit had put a "nail in the coffin of the December 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement." The U.S.-Russian agreement alluded to by defence minister Shamkhani – dealing with Russia's conventional arms trade with Iran and with Russian missile and nuclear technology transfers to the Islamic Republic – had originally included an understanding that Russia's nuclear cooperation with Iran would be limited to the construction of the Bushehr-1 plant. By the year 2000, however, Russia had renounced such a constraint and declared its right to provide the Iranians with additional nuclear power reactors. (Salehi 2003d: 3; *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 December 2000 and *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* 2003: 21–22)

that international rules regulating nuclear transfers should be multilaterally agreed upon. Iranian officials noted that negotiations on such transfer guidelines could be conducted, for example, at the IAEA, and that they should include all concerned parties – both the supplier and the recipient countries.[414] Moreover, the Khatami administration repeatedly stressed that nothing should be done to undermine the IAEA's role as the only competent authority to verify NPT member states' compliance with their treaty obligations. Underlining the IAEA's central role in nuclear verification, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted that any concerns over the NPT parties' compliance with their safeguards agreements should be directed to the agency. The countries that pointed to a potential case of non-compliance, Iranian officials continued, should validate their suspicions by providing the IAEA with supporting evidence and information. Only then, the Iranians added, should the agency "consider, investigate, draw conclusion and decide on necessary action in accordance with its mandate." (Aghazadeh 2003a: 11; *Statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran* 2003: 3 and CD/PV.940, 2003: 17)

The representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained that, theretofore, the safeguards system of the IAEA – characterized by them as a "fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime" – had functioned successfully and significantly contributed to the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation. Therefore, because of "strategic considerations," the Iranians explained, their country fully supported the measures that aimed to improve the IAEA's verification machinery. Still, and as already indicated above, Iran committed itself to those measures only after strong international pressure. (*IRNA*, 5 February 2003; Shakerian 2003: 1 and Aghazadeh 2003b: 2)

As far as the IAEA additional protocol – the main component of the effort to strengthen the agency's verification capabilities – was concerned, Iran had, since the acceptance of the Model Additional Protocol by the IAEA's board of governors in May 1997, constantly voiced its support for the document. Simultaneously, however, it had carefully delineated the circumstances under which it would be ready to seriously

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[414] Disapproval of the international restrictions on nuclear technology exports to NPT member states had been a key component of the Khatami administration's nuclear arms control operations right from the start. The Khatami government had portrayed such restrictions as a major obstacle to developing countries' development efforts and called for their swift removal. Note, for example, Iran's following statement at the sixth NPT review conference in April 2000: "One cannot but express dismay over the systematic denial of transfer of [nuclear] technology to developing non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the NPT and restrictive export control policies exercised by the nuclear suppliers. The ad hoc parallel and non-transparent [export control] regimes, acting in defiance of the letter and spirit of the Treaty, continue to pursue subjective, arbitrary and discriminatory policies. The main objective of these regimes, disguised under the pretext of non-proliferation, is to secure the dominance and exclusive possession of nuclear technology by developed countries. The situation should be redressed" (Kharrazi 2000b).

consider the protocol's adoption. While occasionally trying to evade the question altogether by raising concerns over secondary issues, such as the protocol's impact on IAEA member states' bureaucratic burden, or by calling for the document's universal adoption by NWS and NNWS alike, Iranian representatives had suggested that there were two fundamental conditions for the Islamic Republic's conclusion of the document. Should there be indications that the protocol was being used as a political tool to endanger the Islamic Republic's national security, and unless the existing restrictions on nuclear transfers to Iran were lifted, the Iranians had signalled, their country would not be interested in the protocol. (Zak 2002: 28–29; A/52/PV.49, 1997: 4 and GC/44/OR.2, 2000: 11)

In the course of 2003 – as the international community was stepping up its pressure on Iran to conclude the additional protocol – the twin considerations of national security and access to nuclear transfers started to play an increasingly important role in Iran's nuclear arms control operations[415] and, as discussed above, also became the key topics around which the domestic nuclear debate in the Islamic Republic centered. In the Tehran Declaration of October 2003, Iran obtained the EU trio's recognition of its right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in addition to which Britain, France, and Germany explicitly stated that the IAEA additional protocol was in no way intended to undermine the signatories' national security. In regards to the issue of nuclear transfers, however, the Tehran declaration, which only promised Iran an "easier access to modern technology in a range of areas," clearly fell short of corresponding to the Islamic Republic's wishes.

At the end of the day, the demand for a full access to nuclear transfers made by the Islamic Republic to the European powers was just another expression of a long-lived Iranian diplomatic objective in the area of nuclear arms control. Prior to the Iran-EU nuclear talks of 2003, the Khatami administration had regularly raised the access issue in various international contexts and called for the provision of an international access guarantee to all those NPT parties that had placed their nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards and subjected their nuclear activities to international inspections. The Iranians had insisted that the acceptance of IAEA full-scope safeguards was the only legitimate criterion for determining whether a state would be entitled to nuclear

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[415] For Iranian statements, made in 2003, that linked the Islamic Republic's conclusion of the additional protocol to international recognition of Iran's security interests and to guarantees of access to foreign nuclear technology, see *Memorandum from the Foreign Minister* (2003); *IRNA* (6 July 2003) and *AP* (8 October 2003).

transfers or not. Not even the stipulations of national legislation, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had added, should be allowed to play a role in such decisions because state responsibilities under international law always superseded those emanating from national legislation.[416] (A/53/PV.51, 1998: 5–6; Dehghani 1999a and NPT/CONF.2000/MC.III/WP.10, 2000: 540)

Moreover, the Khatami administration had restated the Iranian position that developing countries which had concluded the NPT ought to enjoy a preferential treatment as far as technology transfers were concerned[417] and that nuclear transfers to non-NPT states should be terminated.[418] Furthermore, the Khatami government had called on the IAEA to defend NPT parties' right to nuclear imports and to ensure that its member states would not be unwarrantedly subjected to nuclear export controls. Should the IAEA fail to do so, the Iranians had concluded, the agency would compromise its credibility and contribute to the erosion of the NPT regime.[419]

Before the Islamic Republic's nuclear efforts had turned into an urgent international matter in 2003, Iran had acknowledged that extra-NPT export control arrangements could not be abolished overnight and adopted a less rigid position on them. Instead of dismissing extra-NPT export controls outright, Iranian officials had called on the NSG and the Zangger Committee to operate more transparently and to embark on a process of dialogue and cooperation with "all interested states parties to the NPT."[420] Pending the abolishment of extra-NPT export controls, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had specifically addressed the NSG – which, in the Iranian view, increasingly saw itself as the supreme international definer of whether NPT members complied with their treaty obligations or not – and asked the group to take measures to promote the causes

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[416] Iranian officials had also stressed that a "non-selective and non-discriminatory" approach to nuclear transfers should become an element of the process of economic globalization (GC/43/OR.2, 1999: 9 and Kharrazi 2002c).

[417] See A/53/PV.51 (1998: 5) and NPT/CONF.2000/MC.III/WP.10 (2000: 541).

[418] See NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/55 (1999: 75); NPT/CONF.2000/18 (2000: 341–342) and Zamaninia (2003: 3).

[419] See A/52/PV.49 (1997: 3); GC/41/OR.2 (1997: 13–14) and Kharrazi (2000). The Khatami government had also repeated Islamic Iran's traditional call for the increase of the IAEA's resources earmarked for technical cooperation with the developing world and called on the agency to maintain a careful balance between its verification and promotional responsibilities (GC/43/OR.2, 1999: 10; NPT/CONF.2000/MC.III/WP.10, 2000: 540–541 and *Statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran* 2003: 2).

[420] In this connection, the Iranians had backed their demands by referring to provision 17 of the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" document which had been adopted by NPT member states at the treaty's 1995 review and extension conference. According to that provision, "transparency in nuclear-related export controls should be promoted within the framework of dialogue and cooperation among all interested States parties to the [nuclear non-proliferation] Treaty" (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 12).

of nuclear transparency, dialogue, and cooperation. (GC/43/OR.2, 1999: 10; Dehghani 1999a and Nasseri 1999: 56)

The Iranians had thanked the NSG for the international seminars – dealing with the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation – it had organized in 1997 and 1999,[421] as well as argued that such seminars should become part of the group's regular activities. Moreover, the officials of the Islamic Republic had called on the NSG to share information with non-members on the group's structure, organization, program of work, and modes of operation. Also, they had asked the NSG to put in motion a process of consultations with countries that were seeking nuclear imports. In such consultations, the Iranians had specified, the NSG should explain to the interested states why a nuclear transfer would or would not take place, and in the case of an export denial, give detailed reasons for such a denial and explain under what conditions the NSG would be prepared to reverse a negative answer. Finally, the Islamic Republic's representatives had called on the NSG to ask the IAEA to verify the accuracy of the nuclear proliferation concerns that the group members might have when contemplating a nuclear transfer decision. Should the IAEA find no evidence of NPT non-compliance by the treaty member interested in nuclear imports, the Iranian argument went, the NSG should automatically give a positive answer to that state's export requests. (Dehghani 1999a and 1999b and Nasseri 1999: 57–58)

The aforementioned Iranian calls aside, the Khatami administration had urged the NSG to adopt a policy of providing the NPT countries concluding the IAEA additional protocol with a full access to nuclear transfers. Also, the Iranians had called on the NSG to devise a mechanism under which those NPT parties whose export requests had been turned down by an individual NSG member state or by the group as a whole could voice their opinions about such rejections. Moreover, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had argued that the NSG should allow interested NPT member states to participate in the group's meetings as observers and with all the rights normally associated with a diplomatic observer status. (Dehghani 1999a and 1999b and Nasseri 1999: 58)

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[421] In accordance with provision 17 of the 1995 principles and objectives document, the purpose of the 1997 and 1999 NSG seminars had been to provide an opportunity for governments and NGO, both within and outside the group, to discuss and exchange views on nuclear export controls. Iran had taken part in both gatherings. The first meeting had been attended by the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative and the second by foreign minister Kharrazi's arms control advisor. For the statements made by the Iranians at the 1997 and 1999 NSG seminars, see Ayatollahi (1997) and Nasseri (1999).

In 2003, as the nuclear crisis between Iran and the international community intensified, the Khatami administration once again expressed the Islamic Republic's readiness to cooperate with the NSG. This time, however, Iran's cooperation-related pronouncements were essentially part of its campaign to convince the world of the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Thus, on 18 June 2003, for example, the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative told the agency's board of governors that his country would welcome the NSG's help in the enforcement of Iranian laws and regulations concerning the control of nuclear materials and equipment. The Islamic Republic's original request for the NSG's assistance in drafting Iranian nuclear export control regulations had been made in September 2002. (Salehi 2003b: 5 and 2003a: 5)

In the end, however, the subtle change that had taken place in the Iranian stance on extra-NPT export controls at the end of the 1990s lost its relevance in the latter part of 2003 as the diplomatic crisis over Iran's nuclear program intensified. After having ended up in the negotiating table with Britain, Germany, and France, Iranian authorities demanded a full and immediate access to Western nuclear transfers in exchange for their own diplomatic concessions. In short, the Islamic Republic was no longer interested in making compromises over the issue of nuclear export controls.

5.3.4 Iran, WMD terrorism, and regional nuclear disarmament

5.3.4.1 The issue of WMD terrorism

In his state of the union address of January 2002, the president of the United States designated Iran as a country that not only pursued nuclear weapons and sponsored terrorism, but also as a state that could some day provide a nuclear bomb to a terrorist group. Such portrayal of Iran by the Bush administration meant that the Islamic Republic's defence of its nuclear activities had to include a two-pronged argument: Iran posed neither a direct nor an indirect nuclear threat to the world.

While trying to convince the international community of their country's disinterest in nuclear weapons, thus, Iranian officials simultaneously sought to refute the suggestions that the Islamic Republic was involved in terrorism and could potentially act as a sponsor of nuclear terrorism. According to the Iranians, the Islamic Republic had never supported terrorism in any part of the world nor harbored terrorists in Iran. On the contrary, the representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that Iran itself had been a

victim of both terrorism and the use of WMD. Portraying themselves as defenders of Islam, Iranian officials also stated that Islam was a peaceful religion and that the efforts to link international terrorism to Islam or Muslim countries were factually inaccurate, politically motivated, and therefore totally unacceptable.[422] (*Press Release* 2002b and *IRNA*, 30 and 31 January 2002)

In the view of Iranian authorities, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States had dramatically demonstrated the way in which all nations, even the most powerful ones, were threatened by terrorism.[423] More specifically, the Iranians added, the events of September 11, 2001, had illustrated that the world was vulnerable, more than ever before, to WMD attacks carried out by non-state actors. Since nuclear weapons were the most dangerous weapons available, Iranian officials maintained, states' policies against WMD terrorism should focus on nuclear arms and on ensuring that terrorists would not get their hands on them. The Iranians underscored the IAEA's centrality in the fight against nuclear terrorism and pointed out that complete nuclear disarmament was ultimately the most effective way of preventing terrorists from obtaining nuclear weapons.[424]

Beside nuclear terrorism, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also discussed the issues of biological and chemical terrorism. Following the October 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States – that is, the sending of letters that contained bacteria causing anthrax by an unidentified perpetrator[425] –, Iranian officials declared that

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[422] The leaders of the Islamic Republic strongly condemned the Iran remarks made by president Bush in his January 2002 speech. President Khatami characterized them as "intervening and war-mongering" and as "truly insulting towards the Iranian nation." The Islamic Republic's supreme leader, in turn, stated that the U.S. government itself was the "greatest evil" and that Iran was "proud of having come under the rage and wrath of the greatest Satan." In Iran's analysis, the Bush administration had linked the Islamic Republic with terrorism in order to serve its interests in the domestic political arena as well as to promote its "militaristic" foreign policy. (*IRNA*, 30 and 31 January 2002 and *Press Release* 2002a)

[423] Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Iran had condemned the terrorist acts carried out by Al-Qaida and offered its official condolences to the American people (Soltanieh 2001c: 1; *IRNA* 30 January 2002 and Sick 2003: 90). To balance their statements of condolence, however, some Iranian officials had also implied that "the wrong U.S. policies and the inappropriate stands adopted by U.S. politicians in the past" had contributed to the attacks (*IRNA*, 30 January 2002).

[424] This paragraph draws upon Nejad-Hosseinian (2001); author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002 and Zarif (2002a). Of course, the issue of nuclear terrorism had been on the international arms control agenda long before the events of September 11, 2001. Thus, for example, already the Shah's Iran had pointed to the dangers of nuclear terrorism and called for international measures ensuring the security of nuclear materials (NPT/CONF.SR.4, 1975: 15). The authorities of post-Pahlavi Iran had started to bring up the issue of nuclear terrorism in the course of the Iran-Iraq war. By referring to the possibility of terrorist attacks against states' nuclear facilities, they had primarily sought to draw international attention to Iraq's war-time attacks against the Bushehr site. (GC/SPL.1/OR.4, 1986: 20; GC/XXXI/OR.296, 1987: 6–7 and GC/XXXI/COM.5/OR.55, 1987: 10)

[425] For a discussion of the anthrax attacks in the United States and U.S. authorities' response to them, see Heyman (2002: 1–4).

bioterrorism was "no science fiction anymore." They called for the conclusion of the BTWC protocol and maintained that the planned international organization charged with the task of overseeing the implementation of the protocol should lead international efforts against bioterrorism. As it became clear that the conclusion of the protocol would be blocked by the United States, Iran referred to an alternative diplomatic framework for international measures against bioterrorism, namely, to the formation of an international coalition that would fight bioterrorism under the aegis of the UN. And after the BTWC protocol would be finalized and the Organization for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons (OPBW) would be in place, the Iranians envisioned, the OPBW would take over the UN coalition's bioterrorism-related responsibilities. (Nejad-Hosseinian 2001; Soltanieh 2001c: 1–2 and BWC/CONF.V/COW/WP.28, 2001: 2)

As far as chemical terrorism was concerned, the officials of the Islamic Republic had first raised the issue during the Iran-Iraq war. Desperately seeking for international support for its diplomatic campaign against Iraq's chemical warfare, the Iranians had pointed out that indifference to Iraq's chemical attacks against their country would increase the possibility of future use of chemical armaments not only by states but by terrorist groups as well. In 1995, after the members of Aum Shinrikyo – the Japanese religious sect – had released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system, the Islamic Republic had condemned the attack and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to finalize the CWC and to establish the OPCW.[426] (CD/PV.417, 1987: 11; Zarif 1995: 128 and Nasseri 1995a: 4)

The events of September 11, 2001, led Iranian representatives also to declare that the use of chemical weapons by terrorists constituted a serious threat to global security and that the OPCW should act as the focal point for international measures against chemical terrorism. When asked about the threat of chemical terrorism to their own country, Iran's officials named two principal dangers: Iraq and Afghanistan. First, the Iranians stressed that Saddam Hussein could use terrorist groups – such as the Iraq-based MKO – as proxies to conduct chemical attacks against their country. Secondly, they claimed the Taliban regime together with other anti-Shi'a and anti-Iranian Sunni actors operating in Afghanistan, including Al-Qaida, could launch a chemical attack against Iran. Finally, the Iranians emphasized that the possibility that these very same groups

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[426] In subsequent investigations, it became known that Aum Shinrikyo had managed to build biological weapons as well and even tried to construct a nuclear weapon. For details, see Allison (2004: 40–42).

might, at some point in the future, carry out a biological or even a nuclear attack against the Islamic Republic could not be ruled out, either.[427]

The Islamic Republic's emphasis on the role of international organizations in the execution of preventive measures against WMD terrorism was indicative of Iranian authorities' preference for multilateral diplomatic approaches to terrorism prevention. In the post-September 2001 world, the Iranians argued, governments had to forge a joint response to international terrorism. On the one hand, Iranian officials noted that no state possessed the capabilities to unilaterally uproot terrorism. On the other hand, they stressed that the international steps taken against terrorism should be built on the interests of all nations. (Khatami 2001; CD/PV.900, 2002: 12 and *Press Release* 2002a)

Given the weight put by the Islamic Republic on multilateralism, or what it called a "law-based counterterrorism strategy," it was no wonder that Iran strongly rejected the Bush administration's unilateral approach to terrorism prevention. According to the Iranians, the Bush government's belief that unilateral military measures would succeed in containing terrorism was both naive and counterproductive. In the long run, Iranian officials argued, the use of violence would only breed more discontent and terrorism in various parts of the world. Therefore, governments should identify and focus on the root causes of international terrorism and try to find solutions to the fundamental problems generating terrorism. As summarized by the Iranian representative before the UN Security Council in October 2002, terrorism was "a response, however perverted and barbaric, to injustice, exclusion and frustration arising from powerlessness." (Kharrazi 2002c; Nejad-Hosseinian 2002b and Zarif 2002b)

Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that apart from concentrating on the root causes of terrorism, governments should agree, within the UN, on an objective definition of the concept of terrorism.[428] In Iran's opinion, there should be a single set of standards according to which terrorist groups would be identified. Arbitrary, politically motivated uses of the label of terrorism, the Iranians warned, would seriously hamper the fight against international terrorism. The officials of the Islamic Republic asserted that the built-in bias in the United States' use of the label of terrorism was a prime example of why an objective definition of the concept of

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[427] This paragraph draws upon author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002 and author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials (A) and (D) who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

terrorism was badly needed. While, for example, turning a blind eye on Israel's state terrorism, the Iranians argued, the United States regarded the Palestinian groups that were rightfully fighting against occupation and oppression as terrorists. Restating their political support for anti-Israeli Palestinian groups, such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, as well as to the Lebanon-based Hizbollah, the authorities of the Islamic Republic called on the UN to formulate a definition of terrorism that would draw a conceptual distinction between terrorists and those who belonged to national resistance and liberation movements.[429] (Nejad-Hosseinian 2002b; *Press Release* 2002a and *IRNA*, 2 April 2002)

Of course, Iran's own definitions of terrorism were far from being politically neutral. According to the representatives of the Islamic Republic, their country had been a victim of terrorism ever since the 1979 revolution. Therefore, the Iranians claimed, the Islamic Republic had always understood the dangers of terrorism and regarded the fight against terrorism as a top national priority.[430] Following the events of September 11, 2001, Iran announced its intention to be in the forefront of the fight against international terrorism and urged world leaders to convene a "global summit" that would create a "coalition of peace" aiming to find practical ways to tackle terrorism and promote international peace and security. This proposal made by the Khatami administration was accompanied, not unexpectedly, by Iranian calls for a paradigm change in international relations. Unless states would change their way of seeing international relations in zero-sum terms and resort to diplomatic tools such as "dialogue among civilizations, de-escalation of tension, and confidence-building," the representatives of the Khatami government asserted, the fundamental causes of terrorism could never be completely uprooted. (*BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 28 September 2001; Khatami 2001 and Kharrazi 2002c)

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[428] For a discussion of the problems related to the formulation of a universally accepted definition of terrorism – which arise from the fact that the term is used not only for descriptive but for normative purposes as well – and for the various definitions of terrorism, see Onwudiwe (2001: 28–50).

[429] It should be noted here that Iran's leaders had vocally reserved their country the right to support such national resistance and liberation movements ever since the inception of the Islamic Republic (A/41/PV.19, 1986: 123; *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Myth and Reality* 1994: 246 and Chubin 2002: 89).

[430] In a speech delivered on 26 September 2001, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic noted that fighting terrorism was a religious responsibility of all Muslims – an essential fight, a "jihad." Ayatollah Khamenei further stressed that his country would not participate in any U.S.-led campaigns against international terrorism. "We are not with you and we are not on the side of the terrorists, either," Khamenei declared to the U.S. government. (*Voice of the IRI Radio 1*, 26 September 2001 and A/56/PV.15, 2001: 7)

5.3.4.2 The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

Iran and Operation Enduring Freedom

In addition to insisting that the United States divided terrorists into good and bad according to its own needs, the officials of the Islamic Republic claimed that the Bush administration used the fight against international terrorism as a diplomatic smoke-screen behind which it pursued foreign policy objectives that had nothing to do with the containment of terrorism. The theory of a U.S. "hidden agenda," popular in other parts of the Muslim world as well,[431] was applied by the Iranians, among others, to the analysis of the U.S.-led military intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001.[432] While making no effort to hide their dislike of the Taliban regime, Iranian authorities accused the Bush administration of using the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Taliban, and Al-Qaida as pretexts under which it aimed to create an American political and economic hegemony in Central Asia.[433] Ironically, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued, it was the United States that had appeased the Taliban regime in the past and contributed to the creation of Al-Qaida by encouraging young Muslim fighters to go to Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight the Soviet troops stationed there.[434]

Islamic Iran, trying to make the best of the new situation in its neighbouring country, adopted a twofold approach to the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan. On the one hand, Iranian authorities, who could not help pointing out that they had been warning the world about the Taliban for a long time,[435] declared their country's objection to the campaign, stated that Iran would not join the U.S.-led war coalition, and

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[431] For a discussion of the Muslim world's views on terrorism, see Al-Sayyid (2002).

[432] The United States, together with the United Kingdom, began military actions against Afghanistan on 7 October 2001. The military campaign in Afghanistan, which became known as Operation Enduring Freedom, started after the Taliban regime's refusal – in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks – to hand over the leaders of Al-Qaida to U.S. authorities and to close down the terrorist camps located on Afghan soil. Other states that were involved in the military campaign included Australia, which furnished the U.S.-led coalition with combat troops, in addition to which ground and air support forces were provided or promised by the following states: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, and Turkey (Cottey 2003: 167).

[433] See *Voice of the IRI Radio 1* (26 September 2001) and *IRNA* (30 January 2002; 11 May 2002 and 11 January 2003).

[434] Note, for example, the statement issued by Iran's UN mission in New York following president Bush's axis of evil speech: "While some, even in the current U.S. administration, were appeasing the Taliban at the time even when Bin Laden was harbored by them, we resolutely opposed their harsh and repressive policy against the Afghan people and their harboring of terrorists on Afghan soil from the beginning" (*Press Release* 2002b).

stressed the necessity of UN participation in any Afghanistan-related international action (Chubin 2002: 97).

Yet, on the other hand, and as already noted above, Iran refrained from interfering in the military operation in Afghanistan and quietly cooperated with the United States in its execution. While not agreeing to let the coalition use Iran's air space and territory for military purposes,[436] the Islamic Republic did agree to the use of its air space for rescue missions, promised to help U.S. soldiers in distress on Iranian territory, and expressed its readiness to take part in humanitarian activities. In addition, Iran showed active diplomatic interest in peace-building in post-Taliban Afghanistan. According to the Iranians, they wished to see a future Afghan society that would reject violence and manage to form a national government representing all the segments of the Afghan population. Moreover, Iranian officials expressed their hope to develop close cooperation with the new Afghan authorities, among others, in the areas of crime and terrorism prevention. (*Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002 and Kharrazi 2002c)

Iran's two-pronged response to the war in Afghanistan testified to the Islamic Republic's conflicting interests vis-à-vis its eastern neighbour. For one thing, the Iranians had a clear interest in the demise of the Taliban regime which, since its rise to power in 1996, had expressed its hostility towards Iran both in words and deeds. In addition to having been heavily involved in drug trafficking into Iran and having posed a constant security threat to Iranian border towns, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed, the Taliban and its Al-Qaida allies had killed nine Iranian diplomats and journalists in the Afghan city of Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998.[437] (*Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002 and Zarif 2003c)

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[435] According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, "Iran was the first country to recognize and warn the international community against the threat of terrorism and narcotic trafficking emanating from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan" (ibid.).

[436] As pointed out by the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, Iranians did not want to legitimize the U.S. aggression by helping the American military. Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to his country's unwillingness to participate in what he called the "butchering and massacring of the Muslim Afghan nation." Apart from the concern over the fate of Iran's Muslim brethren in Afghanistan, Khamenei's references to the plight of Afghan civilians testified to Iranian authorities' fear that a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan could lead to yet another influx of refugees from Afghanistan to Iran, already a home for more than 2 million Afghan refugees. (*Voice of the IRI Radio 1*, 26 September 2001 and 30 October 2001)

[437] In the wake of the crisis sparked by the killings of its citizens in Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998, Iran had deployed units of its armed forces along the Afghan border. On 15 September 1998, Ayatollah Khamenei had declared a general troop mobilization, and by the end of that month, some 200,000 Iranian soldiers had been massed along the country's border with Afghanistan. For a discussion of the 1998 Iran–Taliban crisis, which ultimately did not lead to military hostilities, see Buchta (2000: 146–148).

For another thing, however, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan was regarded in Tehran as a major security threat to the Islamic Republic. Feeling increasingly encircled by American military forces, and unsure about the Bush administration's intentions regarding Iran, the authorities of the Islamic Republic pointed out that foreign military presence in Afghanistan jeopardized the interests of the Afghan people and those of Iranians, in addition to which Iranian officials declared the military intervention in Afghanistan as a threat to regional security. Politically, the leaders of the Islamic Republic feared that the strong foreign presence in Afghanistan would lead to the formation of an Afghan government that would not seek good relations with its western neighbour. (*Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002 and *IRNA*, 11 and 29 May 2002)

Yet the actual materialization of Iran's objectives in Afghanistan remained another matter. In September 2003, for example, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic expressed his country's concern over the fact that the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaida had managed to regroup and continue their fight against the forces of the U.S.-led coalition (A/58/PV.12, 2003: 28). Thus, even if the collapse of the Taliban regime during November–December 2001 had clearly contributed to Iran's national security, the possibility of a WMD terrorist attack against the Islamic Republic by the Taliban or by an anti-Iranian terrorist group, however probable, had still to be taken into account by the Islamic Republic's political and military leaders.

Iran and Operation Iraqi Freedom

Whereas the possibility of a WMD attack originating from Afghanistan was not ruled out by the authorities of the Islamic Republic, it was clear that Saddam Hussein's Iraq remained the Iranians' main WMD preoccupation. And as emphasized by Iranian representatives, their country was not only concerned about Saddam's chemical and biological capabilities but also about Iraq's ambitions in the nuclear field.[438] Although the IAEA's Iraq Action Team had managed to effectively neutralize the Iraqi nuclear weapons program by the end of 1992, Iranian authorities feared that Iraq would be able to rebuild the program in a short period of time. This Iranian concern had become

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[438] See author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July, 2002 and author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (D) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002.

increasingly topical after December 1998, when Saddam Hussein had declared that the arms inspectors of the UN would not be allowed to enter Iraq anymore.[439]

After taking office in January 2001, the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush had placed Iraq high on its foreign policy agenda. The Bush administration had characterized the post-December 1998 standstill in the Iraq disarmament process as unacceptable and, as a consequence, tried to find ways to put the process back on track. While at this initial stage the Bush government had focused on planning diplomatic steps that could be taken to resolve the arms inspections crisis – including the application of so-called smart sanctions against Saddam Hussein and his regime –, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 had marked the beginning of a new phase in the Bush administration's Iraq policy. In the course of 2002, the Americans had placed Iraq on the axis of evil and, following the premises of the so-called Bush doctrine, let it be known that the United States would be prepared to use military force, even unilaterally if needed, to enforce the disarmament of Iraq's WMD capabilities. (Ben-Zvi 2003: 17; Jervis 2003: 372 and *Arms Control Today*, October 2002)

On 8 November 2002, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1441 which required Iraq to allow UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors to carry out investigations in the country as well as to provide the world organization with an accurate, full, and complete declaration of its WMD-related activities. In addition, the Security Council strengthened international inspectors' powers in Iraq and explicitly warned that resolution 1441 was the Iraqi government's final opportunity to comply with its disarmament commitments. Subject to intense international pressure, Iraq accepted the resolution on 13 November and agreed to submit a declaration of its prohibited weapons programs to the UN by 8 December 2002. Instead of helping to defuse the arms inspections crisis, however, the Iraqi government's declaration of 7 December 2002 merely worsened the situation. The 12,000-page Iraqi declaration, which left many important questions about that country's weapons activities unanswered, prompted the Bush administration to conclude that the declaration contained false statements and omissions and thereby amounted to a breach of the Security Council resolution 1441.

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[439] For the Khatami administration's expressions of concern over the state of arms inspections in Iraq, see S/1998/165 (1998: 2) and Zarif and Alborzi (1999: 512). Of course, the Iranians were not alone with their concern over Iraq's WMD plans. The participants of the sixth NPT review conference, for example, had noted in the conference's final document in May 2000 that since the cessation of IAEA inspections in Iraq in December 1998, the agency had not been in a position to provide any assurance of Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the UN Security Council resolution 687 of April 1991 (NPT/CONF.2000/28. 2000: 18).

As the members of the Security Council did not manage to agree on their next step vis-à-vis Iraq, and as the Bush administration had become convinced that diplomatic means in the matter had been exhausted, the United States eventually started a war against Iraq on 19 March 2003.[440]

By the time the U.S. armed forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Bush administration had justified its recourse to military power by not only referring to the threat posed to the world by Iraq's WMD capabilities, as well as to the possibility that Saddam Hussein could transfer WMD to terrorists, but also by underscoring the necessity of a regime change in Iraq and the introduction of democracy to that country.[441] In Iran – Iraq's eastern neighbour and designated companion on the axis of evil – the U.S. justifications for war were officially declared as pretexts under which the Bush administration aimed at destroying Islam, dominating the Middle East, and getting its hands on Iraq's hydrocarbon reserves.[442] From Tehran's perspective, then, the U.S. military campaign in Iraq was a logical continuation of the process that had been started with the war in Afghanistan: it was another major manifestation of the effort to realize the Bush administration's hidden agenda.

Accordingly, during the months that had ultimately led to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iran had been among the countries that had objected to the use of military force to resolve the arms inspections crisis in Iraq. Even if the UN Security Council decided to give a mandate to a military operation in Iraq, the Islamic Republic had stressed, it would continue to express its disapproval of the military option. Advocating a peaceful solution to the crisis, the Iranians had argued that the question of Iraq should be handled within the framework of the UN and relevant Security Council resolutions. A unilateral military operation by the United States in Iraq, Iran's representatives had warned, would gravely undermine international law, multilateral diplomacy in the area of WMD disarmament, and most importantly, the security of the Middle East. (*IRNA*, 29 October 2002; Kharrazi 2002c and Zarif 2002c)

One of Iranian authorities' fears had been that a U.S. attack on Iraq would set a precedent and lower the threshold for the policies of regime change and coercive disarmament. As a target of the Bush administration's verbal attacks and as a country

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[440] For a discussion of the Iraq-related diplomatic deliberations at the UN in 2002–2003, see Blix (2004: 11–24 and 75–289).
[441] For the U.S. war objectives in Iraq, see Evron (2003: 27); Gordon (2003: 155–159) and Jervis (2003: 367, 386).
[442] See *IRNA* (11 March 2003); Salehi (2003d: 2) and *IRNA* (22 November 2003).

whose nuclear efforts had become a major topic on the international diplomatic agenda, Iran had had good reasons to strongly reject such policies and to call for a diplomatic resolution of the Iraq crisis. Yet at the same time, and as pointed out by the officials of the Islamic Republic themselves, Iran, a victim of Iraqi use of WMD, had also had a major interest in Iraq's disarmament. Therefore, the Iranians had called on the government of Saddam Hussein to fully comply with the UN demands and to allow international inspectors to complete their job in Iraq. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic had also emphasized that a successful completion of the disarmament process should lead to the lifting of international sanctions against Iraq. (Kharrazi 2002c; *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 October 2002 and Zarif 2003a)

Beyond merely explicating their government's stance on the Iraq crisis, Iranian officials had used the heated international debate on the matter to restate their disapproval of what they viewed as Western governments' hypocritical approach to WMD disarmament in the Middle East. Pointing to Israel's WMD capabilities, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had asked why Iraq was being defined as a regional and global threat, whereas Israel's tools of mass murder continued to be left alone. Also, the Iranians had asked why Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the Iran–Iraq war had not prompted a strong international reaction. Answering their own question, and airing their disapproval of the West's political double standard, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had maintained that the Iraqi WMD capabilities now causing anxiety among Western countries had initially been obtained by Iraq with the help of those very same governments.[443] (*IRNA*, 7 March 2003; Zarif 2003a and Salehi 2003a: 2–3)

After the start of the war in Iraq, Iran strongly condemned the U.S.-led military campaign and argued that the operation flagrantly broke international law. According to the Islamic Republic, there had been no legal justifications whatsoever for the use of military force in Iraq. The unilateral invasion of Iraq, Iranian officials specified, had not been a response to an Iraqi armed attack and neither had the operation been authorized by the UN Security Council. The Iranians noted that it was true that the regime of Saddam Hussein had not lived up to its disarmament obligations under the relevant

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[443] Not coincidentally, in February 2003, in the context of a legal case which originated from 1992 and dealt with Iran's claim that the United States had destroyed three Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf in 1987–1988, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had argued to the Hague-based International Court of Justice that the United States had transferred chemical agents and deadly viruses to Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war (*Der Spiegel Online*, 24 February 2003).

Security Council resolutions, but added that it would have been the Security Council's task and responsibility to decide on how to make Iraq to act on those obligations. Also, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that the Bush administration's objective of a regime change in Iraq and the disarmament of that country through a pre-emptive military campaign seriously fought against international norms on state behaviour. (Zarif 2003b and Aghazadeh 2003a: 2)

While objecting to the use of military force in Iraq – and maintaining that not "even by any stretch of imagination" could Iraq, after 12 years of comprehensive sanctions, have been considered an imminent threat to the national security of the countries of the so-called coalition of the willing[444] –, the Islamic Republic made it known that it would stay impartial in the conflict and not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.[445] Simultaneously, however, there was considerable anxiety in Iran about the war's consequences. First and foremost, the authorities of the Islamic Republic were concerned over U.S. military presence in Iraq. Worried that, at some point in the future, Iran's ruling elite could experience the same fate as the regime of Saddam Hussein, Iranian authorities called on the coalition forces to quickly leave Iraq and to allow the Iraqi people, through the establishment of a broad-based national government, to take their destiny into their own hands.[446] (*IRNA*, 26 March 2003 and 12 April 2003 and Zarif 2003c)

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[444] According to information released by the U.S. state department on 18 March 2003, there were 30 countries that were willing to be publicly associated with the U.S. military campaign against Iraq. This "coalition of the willing" consisted of the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Phillippines, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan. In the Khatami administration's view, it was an illusion to believe that the views of the coalition of the willing on Iraq represented those of the international community. What the world really needed, president Khatami himself argued, was an international "coalition for peace" that would bring justice to and remove violence, terror, and war from the world. (*BBC*, 18 March 2003; Salehi 2003a: 2 and *IRNA*, 15 February 2003)

[445] Prior to the Iraq war, president Khatami had emphasized that his country's opposition to the use of military force against Iraq should not be interpreted as a sign of support for the regime of Saddam Hussein. It should also be noted here that prior to the Iraq war, in the summer and fall of 2002, American officials had secretly met with their Iranian counterparts and asked the Islamic Republic not to interfere in a possible military operation in Iraq. (*IRNA*, 7 March 2003 and Kemp 2004: 8)

[446] Naturally, Iran had a major interest in the direction of Iraq's domestic politics in the post-Saddam era. As noted by Ehteshami (2004: 189), there were three fundamental issues that occupied Iranian leaders' minds in this regard: the future character of the Iraqi state, the role of the Shi'a community in post-Saddam Iraq's political system, and finally, the impact of Iraqi politics on the political scene in the Islamic Republic itself. Both before and after the start of the Iraq war in March 2003, Iranian representatives had also expressed their concern over the war's humanitarian implications (*IRNA*, 14 January 2003 and Zarif 2003a and 2003b).

Apart from the dangers and challenges that the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq posed to the Islamic Republic – whether related to post-Saddam Iraq's domestic developments or to its future foreign policy orientation –, the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein benefited the Iranians in a number of ways. The fact that the Islamic Republic was now able, after two decades, to feel secure from the scourge of Iraq's WMD capabilities was indisputably among the most significant Iranian gains. While prior to the Iraq war the international community had been divided over the gravity of the threat posed to regional and international security by Iraq and its WMD capabilities, at no stage had the authorities of the Islamic Republic claimed that Iraq did not possess WMD. Quite to the contrary, the Iranians had not only made repeated references to Iraq's WMD, but also let it be known that their country had prepared itself for the eventuality that Saddam Hussein's military would use such weapons against occupying American forces, potentially with adverse effects on the Iranian people living in the border region (*AP*, 5 February 2003 and *IRNA*, 26 March 2003).[447]

In the end, then, as it started to become clear, in the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad, that the fears over Iraq's WMD capabilities had largely been unnecessary,[448] Iranian authorities were able to revise their Iraq-related threat perceptions. That the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq also effectively neutralized the hypothetical threat of a WMD attack against the Islamic Republic by the anti-Tehran MKO was another welcome development to the Iranians.[449] The capture of Saddam Hussein by the U.S. military in December 2003 and the Islamic Republic's subsequent announcement that it planned to file a criminal suit against Saddam Hussein for his regime's chemical warfare in the

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[447] It should be noted that Iran's concern over Iraq's WMD capabilities did not prevent it from criticizing the U.S. intelligence on Iraq's arms efforts in order to gain support for its opposition to American employment of military force against Iraq as well as to defend the Islamic Republic's own nuclear program. On 17 March 2003, for example, the Islamic Republic's IAEA representative had referred to the "Niger scandal" as a reminder of how Western governments should be very careful when discussing other countries' nuclear programs. The so-called Niger scandal alluded to by the Iranian representative had centered around the Bush administration's claim – made repeatedly in early 2003 and soon found to be based on false documents – that the Iraqis had tried to obtain uranium for their nuclear weapons program from Niger after they had declared, in 1998, that UN arms inspectors would no longer be allowed to enter their country. (Salehi 2003a: 1 and *Arms Control Today*, September 2003)

[448] The Pentagon, for example, had started, in late May 2003, to publicly suggest that Iraq may have destroyed its chemical and biological weapons before the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The final official account of the U.S.-led investigations of Iraq's suspected WMD programs was released on 25 April 2005 by the Central Intelligence Agency. It reconfirmed the finding already made by U.S. arms investigators that by the time of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Iraqis had destroyed their WMD capabilities and not restarted any WMD-related programs after the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict. (*IHT*, 29 May 2003 and *Arms Control Today*, June 2005)

[449] The U.S. forces in Iraq signed a cease-fire agreement with the Iraq-based MKO on 15 April 2003 and subsequently disarmed the organization (*IHT*, 29 April 2003 and *The Los Angeles Times*, 19 March 2005).

Iran–Iraq war was a dramatic manifestation of the way in which the war in Iraq had rendered that country's WMD a secondary concern to the Iranians.[450]

5.3.4.3 The call for a WMD-free Middle East

As already noted above, in the Tehran declaration of 21 October 2003, Iran and the EU trio of Britain, Germany, and France agreed to work together towards the establishment of a zone free from nuclear arms and other WMD in the Middle East. Given that the issue of a WMD-free Middle East had already been an integral part of Iran's arms control operations, the European powers' recorded commitment to the idea offered the Iranians an additional diplomatic avenue to express their demand for the creation of such a zone. And indeed, following the October 2003 declaration, the Islamic Republic began to call on the three European powers to keep their promise and to actively promote the realization of the zone initiative (*IRNA*, 17 November 2003).

Since its inception, the Khatami administration had continued to present Iran's traditional case for a NWFZ in the Middle East as well as to voice the Islamic Republic's support for a regional arrangement that would remove all kinds of WMD from the Middle East.[451] As before, the Iranians had maintained that the establishment of a NWFZ or a WMDFZ in the region was necessitated, first and foremost, by the imminent threat posed to the regional peace and security by Israel's nuclear weapons. Israel's possession of nuclear armaments, the Khatami government had emphasized, was a major source of instability in the Middle East because it fuelled regional arms racing both in the area of conventional and non-conventional weapons. Therefore, Iranian officials had concluded, Israel's rejection of nuclear weapons should constitute the first and fundamental step in any effort to turn the Middle East into a WMD-free region. (CD/PV.798, 1998: 3; A/CN.10/PV.222, 1998: 17 and A/C.1/57/PV.15, 2002: 4)

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[450] The Islamic Republic characterized the capture of Saddam Hussein as "happy news for everybody" and particularly for the Iranian and Iraqi people who had suffered most from the dictator's policies. As far as Iran's planned criminal suit against the former Iraqi leader was concerned, Iranian foreign ministry representatives spoke of a trial at an international court, whereas the Iranian judiciary wanted to try Saddam Hussein on Iranian territory for war crimes committed during the Iran–Iraq war. (*IRNA*, 15 December 2003)

[451] Under Khatami, the Islamic Republic had continued to express its support for the creation of NWFZ or WMDFZ in other parts of the world as well. Following India's and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests, for example, Iranian officials had stepped up their calls for the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia. As far as the negotiations on the creation of a NWFZ in Central Asia, launched in 1997, were concerned, the Islamic Republic had expressed its support for the talks and welcomed the agreement, achieved in September 2002, on the content of the treaty establishing a Central Asian NWFZ. (A/C.1/52/PV.11, 1997: 20; CD/PV.792, 1998: 31 and Zarif 2002a)

Moreover, under Khatami, Iran had continued to point out that "the so-called peace process" between Israel and the Palestinians should not be linked to the question of a nuclear- or WMD-free Middle East. The representatives of the Islamic Republic had stressed that the zone initiatives were independent issues and should not be made dependent on the outcome of the Israeli–Palestinian negotiations or on any other precondition, for that matter. Thus, the Islamic Republic had once again rejected Israel's stance that it would not take any major arms control steps before the attainment of a broad political settlement in the Middle East. (A/C.1/52/PV.18, 1997: 5; A/C.1/53/PV.26, 1998: 3 and A/CN.10/PV.227, 1999: 4)

As a result of Israel's unwillingness to back down on its position, the Khatami administration had continued to call on the international community and particularly on NWS to pressure Israel to join the NPT and to accept the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA. In this context, Iranian officials had also expressed their discontent with the implementation of the Middle East-related resolution that had been adopted at the 1995 NPT review and extension conference. The resolution in question – whose purpose had been to address Middle Eastern states' concerns over Israel's nuclear weapons as well as to obtain those countries' acquiescence to the indefinite extension of the NPT[452] – had endorsed the idea of a Middle Eastern zone that would free the region of nuclear arms and other WMD, asked the regional states to take practical steps towards the establishment of such a zone, as well as called especially on NWS to contribute to the creation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East. In addition, the 1995 NPT resolution had noted with concern the continued existence in the region of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and called on all Middle Eastern states that had not yet acceded to the treaty and placed their nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards to do so. (GC/42/OR.3, 1998: 22; Nejad-Hosseinian 2002a and NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 13–14)

Stressing the necessity of the 1995 NPT resolution's prompt implementation, the Khatami government had pointed out that the NPT review conference of 2000 had reaffirmed the importance of that resolution and recognized that the document would

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[452] For a discussion of the Arab position on the extension of the NPT, see Feldman (1997: 216–224). Although Iran had referred to the issue of Israel's NPT accession as a factor that would have a major impact on the Islamic Republic's final stance on the treaty's extension, Iranian officials had never stressed the diplomatic linkage between Israel's behaviour and the NPT's future as fiercely as their Arab counterparts. As already mentioned above, before ultimately going along with the 1995 NPT conference's decision to indefinitely extend the treaty, Iran had belonged to those states parties that had called for the

remain valid until its objectives were achieved.[453] Also, the Khatami administration had emphasized that Israel was now the only state in the Middle East that had not acceded to the NPT.[454] (Naziri 2003: 1 and A/C.1/57/PV.15, 2002: 4)

The NPT context aside, Iran had promoted the idea of a WMD-free Middle East in other diplomatic arenas, too, including at the meetings of the NAM,[455] the OIC,[456] as well as in bilateral talks, for example, with Russia[457] and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms. In addition to making joint calls with the Gulf Arab states for the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East, the Islamic Republic had continued to call for creation of a sub-regional WMDFZ in the Persian Gulf. As before, such Iranian calls had been tightly linked to Iran's initiative of the creation of an indigenous security system in the Gulf.[458] The Khatami administration had claimed that the need for the establishment of a Gulf WMDFZ had been necessitated, for example, by the potential threat that the U.S. warships patrolling the Persian Gulf were carrying nuclear armaments aboard. (Vaezi and Saghafi-Ameri 2000: 447; Kharrazi 1997: 465 and Eisenstadt 1998a: 75)

Although the Islamic Republic had represented itself as a staunch advocate of a WMD-free Middle East, it had recognized that the odds of Israel giving up its nuclear weapons were not high, at least not in the short run. Thus, the representatives of the Khatami administration had suggested that pending the creation of a Middle Eastern NWFZ or WMDFZ, no state in the region should "develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices." At the same time, the

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adoption of a formula where the NPT would be extended for a series of fixed periods after which the question of indefinite extension could be revisited again. (NPT/CONF.1995/32, 1995: 100–101)

[453] At the 2000 NPT review conference, the Islamic Republic had supported the ultimately unsuccessful Egyptian initiative which had called for the creation of a NPT mechanism, a special committee, to monitor the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (Steinberg and Etengoff 2002: 38).

[454] After heated diplomatic consultations at the NPT review conference of 2000, Israel's status as the only Middle Eastern non-party to the treaty had been written down in the conference's final document. According to Iranian officials, the explicit reference to Israel – together with the final document's reaffirmation of the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and its allusion to the importance of a full-scope safeguards agreement between Israel and the IAEA – had constituted a diplomatic victory for the Islamic Republic. (*IRNA*, 21 May 2000 and *Foreign Ministry Viewpoints* 2000b)

[455] See A/C.1/53/PV.6 (1998: 12–13); A/CN.10/PV.227 (1999: 4) and *IRNA* (9 April 2000).

[456] See *BBC Monitoring Middle East* (2 October 1999).

[457] In July 1998, for example, Iran and Russia had issued a joint statement calling for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East (A/C.1/53/PV.6, 1998: 12).

[458] Note, for example, the following remarks made by the Islamic Republic's UN representative in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq: "We [...] believe that it is time to finally establish an indigenous and internationally guaranteed regional security arrangement under United Nations auspices. The momentum created by the removal of Saddam should be used to replace mistrust and the arms race with mutual security and transparency. As the region's largest and most populuous country, Iran has a great stake in discouraging a renewed arms race, especially one involving unconventional weapons" (Zarif 2003c).

Iranians had demanded that the countries of the Middle East should refrain from activities that would run against the letter and spirit of the NPT as well as against the multilateral diplomatic documents dealing with the establishment of a NWFZ in the region. (Naziri 2003: 1)

Under president Khatami, the Islamic Republic's statements on Middle Eastern security had continued to contain strong verbal attacks against Israel. Not only a direct danger to the region and to the whole world, Iranian officials had asserted, Israel's nuclear weapons were a political instrument that could be used by Israeli authorities at any time to threaten other Middle Eastern countries. While calling on extra-regional powers to apply pressure on Israel to give up its WMD capabilities, the officials of the Islamic Republic had demanded that those same powers – and the five NWS, in particular – should refrain from transferring nuclear materials, equipment, and know-how to Israel.[459] (Chubin 2002: 40; GC/43/OR.10, 1999: 14 and NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/55, 1999: 75)

Moreover, Iran had kept on strongly rejecting the Israeli claim that the Islamic Republic itself was pursuing nuclear bombs and related delivery systems. The Khatami administration had found it "ironic" to hear such allegations from a country that ignored international disarmament efforts and actively worked on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as well as on long-range missiles. Israel, the Iranians had observed, was making its false Iran accusations in order to divert international attention from its "endless hunger for armaments, in particular WMD," and from its "militaristic policies" and "state terrorism."[460] (A/C.1/52/PV.10, 1997: 24; Kharrazi 2000b and Rafsanjani 2001)

In 2003, after Iran's nuclear program had turned into a major international issue, the verbal exchanges between Iran and Israel had become harsher. On the one side, Israeli officials had gone so far as to describe the Iranian program as the biggest threat to Israel's existence since its creation in 1948. The Israelis had emphasized that Iran's possession of nuclear weapons would be an intolerable threat to their country and made it clear that should the Iranian nuclear program not be stopped, Israel would be prepared

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[459] Furthermore, to back their diplomatic demands, Iranian officials had continued to refer to Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor as a threat to the people and the natural environment of the Middle East. According to Iran, the "structural cracks" in the Dimona reactor had made the risk of transboundary radioactive contamination in the region highly topical (GC/42/OR.10, 1998: 38).

[460] In early 2002, for example, Iran's defence minister Ali Shamkhani had characterized Israel as a "university of terrorism" and that country's prime minister Ariel Sharon as the "professor of terrorism in Israel" (*Al-Jazeera*, 5 February 2002).

to take unilateral pre-emptive military action against the Islamic Republic.[461] Iranian nuclear weapons, Israeli authorities had warned, would pose a serious threat to the Middle East and to Europe and Russia as well. (*IHT*, 18 November 2003; *The Scotsman*, 23 November 2003 and *Helsingin Sanomat*, 22 July 2003)

On the other side, Iranian officials had warned Israel of the consequences of military action against their country. An attack on the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities or any other target in Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic had emphasized, would be considered a declaration of war by the Islamic Republic and result, as put by one IRGC commander, in a "crushing response."[462] Given that Israel had already resorted to a pre-emptive military strike at a nuclear facility in Iraq in 1981, Iranian authorities took Israel's threats seriously. Iran's concerns over Israel's military plans had intensified after Israel and Turkey had concluded a bilateral military cooperation agreement in 1996. In that agreement, the two parties had agreed to cooperate, among others, in intelligence sharing, military training, and anti-terrorism activities. From Tehran's perspective, the 1996 agreement had strengthened Israel's espionage and intelligence capabilities and thereby the Israeli ability to carry out a military operation against Iran. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic had strongly condemned the 1996 agreement and defined it as an Israeli effort to divide the Muslim world. Iran had also condemned Turkey for its decision to cooperate militarily with Israel and argued that the agreement had increased instability in the Middle East. (Boutwell 2003: 4; El-Shazly and Hinnebusch 2002: 78–79, 89 and *Foreign Ministry viewpoints* 2002)

Furthermore, during 2003, the Islamic Republic had claimed that Israel and the pro-Israeli lobbies in Washington had been responsible for the mobilization of the IAEA and the international community against Iran's peaceful nuclear program. Even though Iran had exaggerated Israel's impact on the Bush administration's Iran diplomacy, the Israelis had nevertheless tried to actively influence the U.S. responses to the Iran crisis.[463] Much to Iran's satisfaction, however, the Islamic Republic's diplomacy at the IAEA had been supported by Arab governments who, in their effort to use the Iran case

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[461] The debate on pre-emptive Israeli military action against Iran had focused on a potential Israeli attack against Iran's nuclear facilities. Nevertheless, as noted by Kemp (2004: 27), Israeli officials had also implied that they might alternatively try to affect the Islamic Republic's nuclear behaviour by striking at other Iranian targets, particularly at the country's highly vulnerable oil infrastructure.

[462] See *AFP* (28 September 2003).

[463] The issue of Israel's influence on the Bush administration's diplomatic approach to Iran's nuclear program has been a matter of debate among scholars. Brom (2003: 141), for example, has gone so far as to claim that the U.S. effort to have the IAEA declare that the Islamic Republic had violated the NPT had

as a diplomatic weapon against Israel, had criticized the IAEA for singling out Iran for its alleged nuclear arms program while ignoring Israel's WMD. (*Daily Star*, 1 November 2003; *IHT*, 8 May 2003 and *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 30 September 2003)

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originally been an Israeli initiative. Be that as it may, U.S. officials have acknowledged that Israel had strongly pressed the Bush administration to take the Iran problem seriously (*IHT*, 8 May 2003).

6 TAKING STOCK OF ISLAMIC IRAN'S ARMS CONTROL POLICY

The purpose of this closing chapter is to, first of all, sum up what has been said in the preceding chapters about post-revolutionary Iran's arms control operations. Secondly, and more importantly, however, this chapter seeks to identify the individual objectives that have presumably guided the Islamic Republic's activities in the four different thematic areas of its arms control policy during the 1979–2003 period and to connect the objectives with the fundamental Iranian foreign policy goals which they have stemmed from. Finally, what follows includes a brief, tentative discussion about change and stability in the Islamic Republic's arms control operations. The focus of the analysis will be on the content, objectives, means, and the level of effort of the Iranian operations.

6.1 Conventional Arms Control: Objectives, Actions, and Means

6.1.1 The pre-war period, 1979–1980

Following the 1979 Iranian revolution, the country's new decision-makers started to formulate and execute policies that corresponded with their revolutionary ideals in domestic and foreign affairs. While the political turbulence in post-revolutionary Iran prolonged the transformation of the national policies, the various domestic forces that had joined hands to overthrow the Pahlavi regime shared a basic set of views and interests that enabled Iran's policy-makers to start to develop a new political identity for their country.

The Islamic Republic's arms control operations following the revolution testified, for their part, to the pattern in which the adoption of broad policy guidelines preceeded the formulation of detailed courses of action. Accordingly, Iranian leaders' first post-revolutionary policy objective in the area of arms control was to *position the Islamic Republic diplomatically*. The steps taken to realize this objective focused, first, on distancing the new Iranian regime and its policies from the Pahlavi monarchy and, secondly, on introducing the ideological building blocks on which the Islamic Republic's future arms control operations would rest.

As far as the deposed Shah was concerned, post-Pahlavi Iran's arms control officials – at this stage still including many individuals who had initially been named to their

posts by the Shah's government – used international diplomatic fora to harshly criticize the ousted monarch's ambitious armament programs and the heavy investments made by his regime in the development of Iran's armed forces. According to the representatives of the Islamic Republic, the policies of the Shah had amounted to terrible waste of Iran's national wealth, relied on false priorities, and totally ignored the real needs of the Iranian people. For the Shah, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, arms control diplomacy had been an instrument with the help of which the Pahlavi regime had sought to conceal its true, aggressive military intentions.

The intentions Iranian officials referred to were defined as inseparable from those of the great powers. Indeed, the leaders of post-revolutionary Iran portrayed the Shah as nothing but a puppet of "great power imperialists" and the United States, in particular – even if, at this early post-revolutionary stage, Iranian diplomats, still taking instructions from the provisional government of Mihdi Bazargan, refrained from launching outright verbal attacks against the Americans. The linkage drawn between the Shah and "imperialistic powers" meant that in order to distance itself from the policies of the Shah, the post-Pahlavi Iranian regime had to simultaneously distance itself from the great powers as well.

The officials of the Islamic Republic did that willingly. They emphasized that it was the major powers that had armed the Shah to the teeth and claimed that the weapons transfers to the Iranian monarch had served exploitative purposes. In the Iranian analysis, foreign arms shipments to the Shah's Iran had been a means for the major powers to extract the wealth of the Iranian nation and to militarize the Iranian society so that the Shah, who had ingratiated himself with foreign powers in order to secure the interests of Iran's corrupt monarchical elite, would be powerful enough to act as the regional proxy of foreign powers.

Accordingly, the representatives of the Islamic Republic not only indirectly criticized the role that the Shah's Iran had adopted and played in the United States' so-called Twin Pillar strategy in the 1970s, but also openly challenged what they saw as the great powers' general policy of exploiting Third World countries and harnessing them to fight civil and regional wars on their behalf. Iranian authorities claimed that major power imperialism and the great power policy of using Third World states as proxies explained the constant increases in military expenses both in the developed and the developing world. The Iranians offered the same explanation when discussing the reasons for Third World countries' dramatic societal problems.

Iranian representatives declared that the Islamic Republic's military and security policies would be in total contrast with those of Pahlavi Iran. Unlike the Shah, the Islamic Republic would harbor no military ambitions, and nor would it ignore the needs and wishes of Iran's "liberated masses." Moreover, Islamic Iran would pursue a policy of peace and genuinely commit itself to arms control. In order to show the world that they were going to live up to their word, the leaders of the Islamic Republic reinforced their diplomatic message by unilaterally cancelling orders placed by the Shah for U.S. weaponry and for armaments from Iran's secondary arms suppliers. Moreover, the Islamic Republic made it known that it would be ready to resell the armaments the Shah had received shortly before the revolution to interested countries.

Expressing their objection to what they alluded to as the imperialistic policies of the major powers, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also questioned the existing conditions in international relations and declared their country's strong opposition not only to military alliances, arms racing, and the use of weapons transfers as a foreign policy tool, but also to the deployment of military troops and the establishment of military bases in foreign countries. Here, again, Islamic Iran supplemented its diplomatic argumentation with a set of unilateral arms control measures. The Iranians withdrew their troops from Oman and their country's membership in CENTO, closed down the United States' intelligence gathering sites in Iran, and cancelled their bilateral defence agreements with the Americans and the Soviet Union.

While voicing its disappointment at the marginal role that arms control played in inter-state relations, the officials of the Islamic Republic nevertheless also expressed their belief that through national and international measures, led by the United Nations, states would be able to change the unjust world around them. The Iranians portrayed themselves as major advocates of arms control and maintained that the experiences of the Iranian people as victims of the Shah's and the great powers' senseless, brutal, and imperialistic policies lend great moral credibility to Islamic Iran's diplomatic actions in the area of arms control.

Post-Pahlavi Iran's initial, pre-Iran-Iraq war remarks on arms control served a number of fundamental foreign policy goals. By distancing itself from the policies of the Pahlavi monarchy and by openly denouncing the major powers' – and particularly the Cold War superpowers' – dominance of the international system, Iran wanted to gain diplomatic recognition, respect, and status and to internationally regain what the representatives of the Islamic Republic viewed as the lost honor and self-respect of the

Iranian people. Moreover, Islamic Iran used international arms control arenas to present the elementary ideological elements of its foreign policy thinking and to introduce itself as a new ideological force in international relations. Still, at this at this early phase of the Islamic Republic's arms control operations, the ideological message put forward by Iranian officials was heavily influenced by Third Worldism[1] and less by Islam which, in the Iranian view, provided the ultimate guidelines for virtuous state behaviour.

Iranian officials' diplomatic argumentation also served the objective of *protecting the revolution and Iran's Islamic regime*.[2] The representatives of the Islamic Republic believed that the restoration and defence of Iran's political independence would necessitate, both in word and deed, a diplomatic course that would challenge the great powers. Given that the leaders of post-Pahlavi Iran defined the great powers – and the United States, in particular – as actors that had projected their power and dangerous influence not only into Iran but into all other corners of the world as well, the statements made by Iranian officials contained an in-built constellation, at the ideological level, of a confrontation between Iran and the major powers.

While in the immediate aftermath of the Iranian revolution this confrontation still remained more or less a theoretical issue, it soon transformed into a concrete fact. Finding itself in direct conflict with the United States over the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979, the Islamic Republic started to rely on arms control diplomacy in order to deal with immediate threats to its security. Thus, Iranian officials interpreted the United States' increasing military presence in the Persian Gulf as a direct move against their country and strongly condemned the build-up of U.S. military power in the region. In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic used international arms control fora to denounce the failed U.S. military operation of April 1980 to rescue the American embassy hostages as a military aggression against Iran. Given that the hostage crisis and the radical rhetoric emanating from Tehran – which did not hide the Islamic Republic's intention to spread its revolutionary message to other countries – had already severely damaged Iran's international image, however, Iranian officials' diplomatic attempts to draw international attention on what they portrayed as great power hostility against their country effectively fell on deaf ears.

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[1] The term 'Third Worldism' is used here to refer to the idea of a Third World collective identity and the corresponding belief in its common interests (Korany 1986: 1).

[2] The unilateral arms control steps taken by the Islamic Republic soon after the revolution were also partially intended for advancing this objective, for in the view of post-Pahlavi Iran's leaders, who equated

6.1.2 The war years, 1980–1988

Iraq's invasion of Iran on 22 September 1980, only some 19 months after the Iranian revolution, put the leaders of the Islamic Republic in a difficult situation. What was at stake now was not only the fate of the Iranian revolution and the country's Islamic regime, but Iran's survival as an independent state as well. Diplomatically, the officials of the Islamic Republic responded to the start of the Iran–Iraq war by depicting the conflict as a foreign conspiracy against their country. In the official Iranian view, the war was essentially an effort by imperialistic powers – and the United States, in particular – to eliminate the threat that the Islamic Republic posed to their interests in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. The role of Saddam Hussein's Iraq was to do the dirty work for the foreign powers and try to destroy Iran's revolution and its Islamic system of government.

The representatives of the Islamic Republic maintained that Saddam Hussein would never have been able to attack their country without outside support. Accordingly, Iranian officials' key war-time objective in the area of conventional arms control was to *forestall foreign military assistance to Iraq*. The Iranians, concerned over the impact of foreign assistance on the course of the war, sought to realize their objective by using international arms control fora to single out and strongly criticize the main supporters of the Iraqi war effort. In addition to pointing to the role of the United States, the Soviet Union, and France in arming Iraq's military, the Iranians condemned the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' – and especially Kuwait's and Saudi Arabia's – bankrolling of Saddam Hussein's arms purchases and verbally attacked Iraq's other Arab supporters, mainly Egypt and Jordan, too.

Strikingly, however, the references made by the Islamic Republic's arms control officials to the governments backing Saddam Hussein were only sporadic and did not discuss in detail the content of the war-time cooperation between Iraq and its foreign supporters. Perhaps not wanting to take their criticism of the foreign governments indirectly involved in the war too far, the Iranians focused instead on discussing the state of global conventional arms control at large and thereby tried to influence the developments in the war through general diplomatic argumentation. Accordingly, Iranian officials strongly criticized the lack of meaningful international instruments to

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the Shah's military policies with selling out Iran to foreign interests, their country needed to withdraw from the military commitments of the Pahlavi era in order to regain its true sovereignty.

control conventional weaponry and stressed that their country's fate as a victim of military aggression demonstrated, for its part, that states could not rely on arms control to protect themselves from organized armed violence. The imperialistic aspirations and policies of the great powers – and especially those of the United States and the Soviet Union – were defined by the Iranians as the main cause for the sorry state of affairs in global arms control.

Still, in spite of their gloomy analysis of international politics in general and international arms control in particular, the Iranians argued that there was a way out of the existing circumstances in inter-state relations. In the long run, the representatives of the Islamic Republic claimed, efforts in the area of arms control would bear fruit only if they were made in a transformed international order in which inter-state relations would be built on morality and justice, not on mistrust and rivalries. In the short run, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed, the states of the Third World should follow the example of the Iranian revolution by adopting a moral foreign policy course, by standing against the hegemonic policies of the great powers, and by taking the lead in international arms control.

Iran also asserted that conventional arms control was as important as the control of WMD and called on governments to take immediate steps to sharply reduce the world's military expenditures, to allocate the resources reserved for military procurement to the economic and social development of the Third World, to limit the production of conventional armaments, and to change the rules of the global arms trade. Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic proposed the creation of zones free from superpower conventional armaments and called on states to refrain from using conventional weapons first.

The emphasis placed by the Iranians on the analysis of the state of global conventional arms control suggests that Iran tried to use its macro-level diplomatic argumentation not only to undermine foreign powers' support for Iraq's war machinery, but also to *propagate the Islamic Republic's views on international relations in general and arms control in particular*. Through such propagation, Iranian representatives hoped to gain diplomatic recognition, status, and respect for their country as well as to further the Islamic Republic's ideological aspirations. Considering their country a vanguard state whose Islamic ideology offered a way out of the existing, unjust international order, the Iranians, strongly believing that the alteration of social and political conditions in other countries was part of the Islamic Republic's revolutionary

mission, eagerly tried to spread their anti-hegemonic and anti-status quo message of world affairs.[3]

The effort to justify and legitimize Iran's war policies constituted yet another feature of the Iranian conventional arms control diplomacy during the Iran–Iraq conflict. Accordingly, to answer the question why a country advocating arms control was itself fighting a war and unwilling to accept a peaceful solution to the bloody conflict, the officials of the Islamic Republic responded by stressing that as an innocent victim of external aggression, their country had been forced to take up arms. In other words, it was the conspiratorial foreign powers' intention to destroy the Islamic Republic that had compelled Iran to resort to the use of military force.

The primary purpose of Iranian officials' attempts to justify and legitimize Iran's actions in the war was to *secure the Islamic Republic's ability to wage the war* and to *protect Iran's ideological credentials at the time of crisis*. In the first place, the Iranians needed to try to fend off the diplomatic pressures that were building up due to Iran's uncompromising war policy that openly aimed at punishing and overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein. This security-related Iranian consideration aside, the officials of the Islamic Republic also had to pay attention to the credibility of their ideological message, for as the war between Iran and Iraq dragged on, the risk that the Islamic Republic's stated ideological aspirations – which, Iranian officials asserted, separated their country from other states and gave the Islamic Republic its moral high ground in world affairs – would clash with Iran's short-term war needs increased correspondingly.

Yet it was not only what Iranian representatives said and did in the context of multilateral diplomatic deliberations on conventional arms control that served the Iranian attempts to secure the Islamic Republic's ability to conduct the war and to sustain the image of a country that lived up to its ideological principles. What the Iranians did not do or say played an equally important role. Thus, for example, probably in the hope that their country would manage to get an access to badly needed U.S. military hardware and thereby maintain its war-fighting capabilities, Iran's arms control diplomats did not openly criticize the American diplomatic effort – known as Operation

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[3] The claim put forward by Iranian officials that, as a result of the oppressive policies of the Pahlavi monarchy and the war that had been imposed on the Islamic Republic by imperialistic powers, their country had come to possess special understanding of the workings of international affairs was indicative of the Iranian tendency to exaggerate the Islamic Republic's uniqueness as a political actor. This Iranian

Staunch – that was launched launched in 1983 to curb foreign arms sales to the Islamic Republic. In a similar manner, the Iranians made no issue of the decisions taken in early 1984 by the U.S. administration of president Reagan to impose, as an anti-terrorism measure, arms export sanctions on Iran (Alikhani 2000: 154).

Iran's diplomatic silence was even more overwhelming when it came to the Islamic Republic's secret arms dealings with the United States in 1985–1986. As a result of the so-called Iran-Contra affair – in which the Reagan administration sold armaments to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages held in Lebanon by the Hizballah organization and used the proceeds to fund the Contra rebel movement in Nicaragua – the Islamic Republic received significant amounts of weapons, together with intelligence information about the Iraqi military, from the Americans. The military hardware received by the Islamic Republic included 2,000 TOW anti-tank missiles, 18 HAWK surface-to-air missiles, and several planeloads of parts for other HAWK missiles that Iran had bought under the Shah but which had become inoperative because of poor maintenance (Pollack 2004: 213).

Another major war-time development that was in dramatic contrast to Iranian leaders' declared ideological posture, and naturally absent from the Islamic Republic's arms control agrumentation, was Iran's clandestine arms dealings with Israel, a state whose right to existence was openly challenged by the Iranians. The arms dealings between the Jewish state and the Islamic Republic had started in March or April 1980 and picked up steam after the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq war. For the Iranians, the war-time arms dealings with Israel were a tactical necessity dictated by the Islamic Republic's desperate need for armaments at a time when diplomatic hurdles prevented Iran from buying weapons from Western sources. As far as the Israelis were concerned, they saw the arms relationship with Iran first and foremost as a way to undermine Iraq which they believed to constitute the single greatest regional threat to their country's security. (Sick 1991: 71 and Parsi 2007: 105–107, 113)

The ease with which post-Pahlavi Iran distanced itself from its ideological aspirations and opened arms relationships with the United States and Israel, two countries which the Iranian leadership had declared as arch-enemies of Islam, demonstrated the length to which the Iranians were prepared to go in order to guarantee the security of their country and its Islamic system of government. And as regards the goal of security itself,

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characteristic is a national version of what Halliday (2005: 10) refers to in the Middle Eastern context as "regional narcissism," the belief that the Middle East is the center of world politics and attention.

the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations in the course of the war were illustrative of the Iranian belief that it was military power, and not diplomatic efforts, that made the ultimate difference in the conflict between Iran and Iraq. Still, the Iranians simultaneously believed that it was worth trying to influence the developments and the military balance in the war by means of arms control diplomacy.

Iranian arms control officials' efforts to *prevent Iraq from launching SSM attacks against Iranian targets* were a case in point in this respect. Unable to militarily deter Iraq from carrying out SSM attacks against military and civilian targets in Iran, the Islamic Republic called on the international community to intervene in Iraq's missile warfare and to take immediate measures to control global production and transfers of SSM. Iranian representatives labelled Iraq's missile attacks as "barbaric and inhumane," accused Iraq of having broken the UN-mediated June 1984 bilateral moratorium on the bombing civilian areas, and stressed that their own country, following the principles of Islam and the instructions of Ayatollah Khomeini, would never conduct military operations against Iraqi civilians.

As the security costs of Iraq's missile attacks increased and the international community showed no serious interest in Iran's missile control calls, the representatives of the Islamic Republic directed strong criticism at foreign governments by accusing them of arming Saddam Hussein and allowing Iraq to continue its missile warfare against Iranians. Then, after the Islamic Republic had managed to create a SSM force of its own, Iran's missile-related arms control operations started to focus on justifying the SSM attacks of the Islamic Republic. According to Iranian officials, their country had been forced to strike back at Iraq because nothing short of in-kind retaliations would have deterred Iraq from continuing its missile warfare.

Iran's desire to *eliminate foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf region* was the sixth major conventional arms control objective of the Islamic Republic during the Iran–Iraq conflict. In the Iranian opinion, such presence, which had increased as the war in the Gulf had dragged on, seriously undermined the stability and security of the region. Arguing that foreign military presence in the Gulf – and more broadly, the Indian Ocean – only served foreign powers' imperialistic designs, Iranian officials demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Gulf and the closing of all foreign military bases in the region. And just like the Shah's Iran had done, the Islamic Republic supported the implementation of the Indian Ocean zone of peace plan as a way to deal with the issue of foreign military presence in the Gulf. Actually, the

representatives of the Islamic Republic even took a step further by insisting on the elimination of great power military presence and rivalries from all other regions of the world as well.

Iran's war-time criticism of foreign military presence in the Gulf included verbal attacks against the Gulf Arab states that had militarily cooperated with extra-regional powers and the United States, in particular. Not infrequently, Iranian officials resorted to outright threats to weaken the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' willingness to cooperate with foreign governments and let it be known that their country was prepared to take drastic military measures – for example, close the Strait of Hormuz – should its vital interests in the Gulf be threatened. Often, however, the Iranians balanced their statements with conciliatory remarks which stressed the Islamic Republic's peaceful intentions as well as the Gulf countries' shared security interests and responsibility to safeguard the region's security through cooperation and without foreign interference.

Iran's most significant policy opening to its Gulf neighbours in this regard was the 1986 initiative for the establishment of an indigenous Gulf security arrangement. Iranian officials called for the creation of a Gulf security order that would respect the regional states' sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity, and which would prevent extra-regional states from interfering with the regional states' internal affairs and lead foreign powers to adopt neutrality in the Iran–Iraq war. Even though the Iranian plan never materialized, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to raise the issue in their war-time talks with individual Gulf Arab governments.

Iran's opposition to foreign military presence emanated from two main sets of considerations. The first had to do with the Islamic Republic's security concerns. The Iranians viewed the foreign military forces in the Gulf as a direct threat to the security of their country and its Islamic regime and feared that extra-regional powers would use their military power to help Iraq to win the war. The second set of the Iranian considerations consisted of power calculations, for a regional order without foreign military presence would have increased Iran's influence in Gulf affairs and thereby also its room of manoeuvre in the war against Iraq.[4]

The Islamic Republic's final major war-time objective in the area of conventional arms control, that of *forestalling Iraq's aerial military operations in the maritime theater of the Iran–Iraq war*, stemmed, above all, from security concerns. Fearing that

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[4] Self-evidently, foreign military presence in the Gulf also dramatically clashed with the Islamic Republic's ideological premises.

Iraq's attacks against Iran's vital economic targets in the Gulf would weaken their country's ability to wage war, the officials of the Islamic Republic used international arms control arenas to portray Iraq's attacks as a threat to regional and international security and to the stability of the world economy, to strongly condemn the Iraqi strikes, and to call for international measures to end the Iraqi operations. That the calls made by the Iranians elicited no international response resulted, not least, from the fact the Islamic Republic itself did not refrain from military operations in the Persian Gulf. Of course, here again, Iran's arms control officials – strongly criticizing foreign governments for their inaction on Iraq's aerial attacks – either kept silent about their own country's military activities or sought to diplomatically justify them.

6.1.3 From the cease-fire to the Gulf conflict

After having accepted the UN Security Council resolution 598 which established a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war, the leaders of the Islamic Republic were faced with the massive task of post-war reconstruction. In the area of foreign policy, the reconstruction imperative required Iran to adopt a more conciliatory diplomatic course and to improve its relations with foreign governments. At the same time, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had to focus on ensuring that the vulnerabilities of the Iranian state in the aftermath of a long and costly war would not invite foreign powers to challenge Iran's national security. Although the Islamic Republic sought to safeguard its post-war security primarily by launching a rearmament program, it also kept relying on arms control diplomacy as a means to promote its security interests.

Iran`s diplomatic effort to *persuade Iraq to agree to a final peace settlement satisfactory to the Islamic Republic* was illustrative of Iran's utilization of international arms control arenas for the advancement of its security interests. Hoping to draw international attention to what they depicted as Saddam Hussein's dangerous intransigence in the bilateral peace talks – which, the Iranians claimed, was encouraged by the UN Security Council's reluctance to guarantee Iraq's compliance with the resolution 598 – Iranian representatives focused, in particular, on pointing to Iraq`s refusal to withdraw its forces from occupied Iranian territory. The officials of the Islamic Republic warned that Iraq`s occupation of Iranian territory was a source of tension and a factor that could trigger renewed hostilities between the two states.

Iraq played a role also in the Iranian efforts to *create security cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms*. While declaring that their country wanted to establish firm and good neighbourly relations with GCC states and that it harboured no ambitions to dominate the Gulf region, Iranian authorities believed that fence-mending with the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms could induce those countries to put pressure on Iraq to alter its behaviour in the peace talks with their government. On the other hand, through multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, Iran sought to foster better relations with GCC governments in order to create a counterforce to contain Iraq and to prevent it from militarily challenging the post-war security order in the region.

Iran's diplomatic argumentation on Gulf security included the assertion that the Islamic Republic's 1986 initiative on the establishment of an indigenous regional security system free from extra-regional influence offered a means to ensure the long-term security of the Persian Gulf. But while regularly referring to their governments 1986 initiative, which effectively ruled out the participation of Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the proposed security arrangement, the representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that Iran and GCC states should start their security cooperation by engaging in a security dialogue that would deal, for example, with the regional states' threat perceptions. After such initial CBM, the Iranians continued, the parties could move to discussing and adopting more ambitious arms control measures.

Iran's calls for a regional security arrangement were closely linked to the Iranian objective of *driving foreign powers out of the Persian Gulf.* Yet, whereas the establishment of an indigenous security system was seen by the Iranians as a longer-term aspiration, the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region was something the Islamic Republic wanted to occur immediately. According to Iranian officials, the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf not only posed a threat to the regional states' physical security and political independence, but it created tension and discord between the Gulf countries as well. While the Iranian demand for instantaneous exit of foreign military forces from the Persian Gulf stemmed, first and foremost, from concerns over the United States' military plans vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic, what Iranian officials remained silent about was the fact that foreign military presence in the Gulf was also an impediment to post-war Iranian plans and influence in the region. In this sense, then, the Islamic Republic's opposition to the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf, just as its security cooperation proposals to the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms, went beyond mere security considerations and reflected Iran's desire to

wield regional influence free from outside constraints and to promote the goal of post-war economic development.

Iran's deliberations on the issue of foreign military presence in the Gulf included criticism of the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' security policies that relied on Western and primarily U.S. military support. In the Iranian opinion, such reliance, as put by president Rafsanjani, was "not in accordance with the spirit of Islam and freedom-loving people." The representatives of the Islamic Republic warned Gulf governments of foreign efforts to dominate the oil-rich and strategically important region and of extra-regional powers' readiness to use intimidation and even military force to secure their interests in the area. Also, the Iranians reminded the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms that those countries' security cooperation with Western powers put a heavy economic burden on them.

Strongly pointing out that the security of the Persian Gulf was the exclusive responsibility of the regional states, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained that as a result of the end of the Iran–Iraq war in 1988 and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in early 1989, there were no pretexts left for Western powers to retain their military presence in the Gulf. Consequently, the Iranians called for the application of naval arms control measures in the region and specifically referred to the Indian Ocean zone of peace plan as an already existing instrument for the purpose.

Security, power, and economic considerations also explained the Iranian arms control objective of *forestalling Western arms transfers to GCC countries*. In the first place, the Islamic Republic's demand that major arms-producing countries should limit their arms transfers to the Persian Gulf region and to the whole of the Middle East stemmed from the fear that the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' – and especially Saudi Arabia's – purchases of state-of-the-art conventional weaponry from the West would open up a technological gap between Iran's military hardware and that of its Gulf Arab neighbours and thereby alter the regional military balance to the detriment of the Islamic Republic which did not have an access to such leading-edge arms technology.

In addition to viewing the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms' military acquisitions as a challenge to Iran's security and regional influence, the Iranians worried that GCC governments' arms purchases would increasingly anchor Western and particularly U.S. military presence in the Gulf – an eventuality that would impose significant constraints on Iran's post-war foreign and security policy aspirations. The arms purchases of Iran's Gulf Arab neighbours posed a major problem for the Iranian leadership in economic terms,

too, for they only sharpened the Iranian dilemma of choosing between the Islamic Republic's post-war security and economic needs.

Finally, Iranian officials' use of international arms control fora to *influence the arms policies of the major powers* reflected, above all, the prestige- and ideology-related aspirations of the Islamic Republic which, in spite of its consciously toned-down post-war ideological prolife, continued to consider itself an important player on the global diplomatic stage. While strongly welcoming the positive developments that took place in international politics in the late 1980s, and while pointing out that the improved international political climate should be transformed into concrete arms control measures both at the global and the regional level, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to blame the major powers for the increase in the number and sophistication of the world's conventional armaments. In the Iranian analysis, the "domineering policies" of the great powers were the reason for global conventional arms racing and for chronic insecurity in the Third World.[5]

6.1.4 The Gulf conflict and beyond

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the subsequent Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 was a watershed event with major political ramifications in the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East. For Iran, the conflict was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it led Saddam Hussein to yield to the Islamic Republic's demands in the peace negotiations with Iraq, constituted a huge blow to Iraq's military might, and enabled the Iranians to show that they were seriously trying to improve their relations with GCC governments. On the other hand, however, the Gulf conflict brought about a massive influx of foreign military forces into the region, a development that was detrimental to the Islamic Republic's security interests and its power aspirations.

Having been more or less bystanders when it came to the developments in the Gulf conflict, Iran's leaders concentrated on using multilateral and bilateral diplomacy to ensure that the Islamic Republic would occupy a central place in the post-conflict Gulf security order. In the area of arms control, Iran's efforts translated into the twin

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[5] Alternatively, or in fact additionally, Iran's criticism of the major powers' arms policies can also be seen as testifying to Iranian authorities' attempt to *divert international attention away from the Islamic Republic's post-war rearmament efforts* and hence facilitate the Islamic Republic's attempts to procure conventional armaments and military technology from abroad and to build up its own arms production

objectives of *driving foreign military forces out of the Persian Gulf* and *establishing an indigenous security system in the region.* In order to pursue the first objective, the representatives of the Islamic Republic called for the adoption of naval arms control measures both at the international and the regional level and continued to view the Indian Ocean zone of peace initiative as a suitable instrument for dealing with the situation in the Gulf.

As for the second objective, the officials of the Islamic Republic – who strongly objected to any extra-regional participation in the post-conflict Gulf security order – pointed to the religious, cultural, and economic bonds between the Persian Gulf states and argued that those ties would help the regional countries to create a security order free from foreign interference. The Iranians noted that the UN Security Council resolution 598 would provide the necessary institutional framework for the Gulf countries' security discussions and envisioned a role for the UN in supporting the process. Also, Iranian officials stressed that the establishment of an indigenous Gulf security system should go hand-in-hand with concrete arms control steps taken, for example, for dealing with the build-up of state-of-the-art conventional weaponry in the region. In fact, by arguing that the Iranian-proposed Gulf security arrangement would stop arms racing in the region and free up resources from military spending for investments in the regional countries' economic, scientific, and technological development, the representatives of the Islamic Republic suggested that the establishment of an indigenous Gulf security architecture would amount to an arms control measure in itself.

As it subsequently turned out, Iran's GCC neighbours chose, to the great disappointment of the Islamic Republic, to safeguard their security in the post-Gulf conflict era with the help of external powers. Still wary of Iran's political and military aspirations in the region, and eager to find powerful allies to contain the threat of Iraq, the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms saw no alternative to alleviating their security concerns through bilateral defence agreements with Western powers and, above all, with the United States, now by far the strongest military power in the world. For the Islamic Republic, the strengthened Western military presence in the Gulf, Iran's hinterland and most important sphere of influence, posed a direct threat to its security and regional

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infrastructure. This objective was linked not only to Iran's security considerations, but also to its calculations regarding the balance of power in the Persian Gulf.

power.[6] The Islamic Republic's feeling of insecurity and diplomatic isolation was only heightened by post-Gulf conflict political developments in the wider Middle East. The U.S.-led efforts to create a new political order in the Middle East, centering around an Arab-Israeli peace, led to a situation where Iran, which opposed the peace process, found itself in confrontation with a bloc consisting of the United States, Israel, and most of the Arab governments, including those of the GCC. In short, the Islamic Republic was on the defensive not only in the Persian Gulf but in the wider Middle East as well.

Iranian leaders' response to what they perceived as a threat to the Islamic Republic's security and regional influence – and secondarily to its welfare and ideological interests – was threefold. First, in the broad Middle Eastern arena, the Iranians adopted a policy which actively sought to undermine and sabotage the efforts towards an Arab-Israeli peace and the planned new Middle Eastern regional order. Secondly, the Islamic Republic tried to signal, through military manoeuvres and targeted arms purchases, especially in the naval area, that if challenged, its armed forces would be able to inflict harm on the United States in the Persian Gulf and to shut down oil shipments through that region. Thirdly, the Iranians sought to drive a wedge into the security relations between the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms and the United States by expressing the Islamic Republic's continued interest in security cooperation with GCC governments and by calling on those governments to join hands with Iran for driving foreign powers out of the Gulf and for establishing an indigenous security system in the region.

The arms control officials of the Islamic Republic played a central role in Iran's attempts to convince the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms of the need to create an alternative to the U.S.-dominated post-Gulf conflict security order in the region. Accordingly, even though the Iranians were highly critical of GCC states' security cooperation with Western governments, dismissed extra-regional Middle East- and Gulf-related arms control proposals, and rejected the ACRS talks, which were a component of the Arab-Israeli peace process, the officials of the Islamic Republic invested a lot of diplomatic effort in trying to improve their country's security relations with GCC countries. But whereas in the course of the Gulf conflict Iran had hoped that its diplomatic openings towards the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms would have induced those states to turn away from

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[6] Iran's concerns over foreign military presence in the Gulf included an economic dimension as well, for the authorities of the Islamic Republic feared that Western powers – and the United States, in particular – would try to use their strong influence in the region to undermine Iran's trade relations with the regional countries. And of course, as before, major power military presence in the Gulf was in tangible contradiction with Iranian leaders' ideological aspirations.

extra-regional powers, now the leaders of the Islamic Republic recognized that Western powers were not going to leave the region anytime soon.

Accordingly, while regularly referring to the need to drive foreign military forces from the Gulf and to establish an indigenous security system in the region, Iranian officials focused on the shorter-term objective of *undermining the security relations between GCC states and Western powers*. The Iranians sought to pursue their objective primarily by calling, both bilaterally and multilaterally, for the implementation of CBM between the Islamic Republic and its GCC neighbours. Throughout the Rafsanjani presidency, the Iranians proposed the establishment of a forum where the Gulf states could discuss security issues – such as their threat perceptions and military doctrines – and agree on concrete CBM, even if the Iranians also pointed out that the existence of such a forum should not be considered a precondition for the application of CBM in the region. As far as the CBM put forward for implementation by the representatives of the Islamic Republic were concerned, they included the following: exchange of reports on national military holdings, prior notification and explanation of national weapons acquisitions, advance notification and observation of troop movements and military manoeuvres, promotion of contacts between the Gulf militaries, and transparency in armaments in the context of the United Nations' conventional arms register.

The post-Gulf conflict offers made by Iran to conduct joint military exercises, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis, with GCC countries were also intended for fostering confidence-building and security cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms. And even though most GCC states had no serious interest in security relations with Iran, the Islamic Republic did manage to take preliminary security cooperation steps – that is, naval CBM – with Qatar and Oman.

Apart from their CBM calls, the Iranians also put forth a number of more ambitious arms control initiatives. Thus, the Rafsanjani administration voiced Iran's readiness to sign non-aggression pacts with GCC governments and raised the option of bilateral defence treaties as well. The efforts by the Islamic Republic to promote security cooperation in the Gulf included references to the concept of non-offensive defence – that is, to the idea that the regional states should organize their national security in ways which would not pose threats to other Gulf countries – and coined the term 'defensive security scheme' in order to make the case that all states' military forces should serve only defensive purposes.

In addition, in the post-Gulf conflict years, Iran's arms control officials tried, in order to protect the Islamic Republic's security and power interests, to limit arms shipments from the West to the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms. While effectively powerless to stop those transfers, which formed a central element of the post-Gulf conflict security collaboration between Western and GCC governments, the Iranians nevertheless tried to pursue their objective through diplomatic means. Hence, Iran's calls for the reduction of the Gulf states' military budgets and weapons procurement, for the channeling of the resources reserved for military purposes to the development of both the Gulf region and the poor countries of the Third World, and for the conversion of military production facilities into civilian ones can be seen as responses to the arms cooperation between individual GCC states and Western powers.

The Islamic Republic's approach to the UN Conventional Arms Register was strongly influenced by Iran's Gulf-related considerations. While supporting the existence of the register and defining it as a component of Iran's defensive security scheme initiative, the representatives of the Islamic Republic critically pointed out that the register had not managed to limit the destabilizing accumulation of conventional armaments in various parts of the world. Also, the Iranians stressed that the register had not succeeded in preventing major arms-producing countries from transferring huge amounts of military hardware all over the world. In the Iranian opinion, the poor performance of the arms register testified to the major powers' politically and commercially driven effort to obstruct progress in the area of global conventional arms control.

Explicitly referring to developments in the Persian Gulf region, Iranian officials regretted that the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms had not provided any information about their national arms acquisitions to the UN register. The Islamic Republic's disappointment at GCC states' reluctance to submit annual register reports may have stemmed from Iran's initial hope that it could have used such reports to fish out information about the details of the arms dealings between Western and GCC governments. On the other hand, Iranian officials may have calculated that such open information would have helped their country to make a stronger diplomatic case against the close security collaboration between the West and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms. Both considerations seem to have also explained, partially at least, why the Islamic Republic lent its support for the broadening of the UN registers' original definition of the term `major conventional weapons' and why the Iranians repeatedly stressed that national military holdings,

together with all conventional armaments deployed in foreign countries, should be included in the register's scope, too.

The Islamic Republic's own readiness to submit information to the UN register was reflective of the Iranian attempt to assuage outside fears, especially in the Gulf region, about Iran's military intentions and to improve the country's international image. However, Iranian authorities – who noted that unilateral transparency could be dangerous because it might "invite aggression" – themselves undermined Iran's register diplomacy by providing their annual returns late, by revealing data that had already become public through other channels, and, as it is widely believed, by omitting information about their country's arms acquisitions. Moreover, Iran's register diplomacy illustrated, for its part, that the Islamic Republic viewed conventional arms control as secondary in importance to WMD arms control.

Iranian authorities were also of the view that, at the end of the day, the security and political benefits of transparency in armaments were meager at best and that states should immediately take more serious steps to control conventional weaponry. The officials of the Islamic Republic accused major arms-producing countries of supplying weapons to every corner of the world and especially to regions suffering from armed conflicts. Once again, the Iranians referred to the situation in the Persian Gulf and claimed that the major powers not only induced and compelled GCC states to buy huge amounts of military hardware, but also pressed those governments to ignore and even torpedo international arms control initiatives. Furthermore, Iran's representatives claimed that the major powers fuelled regional tensions and created imaginary enemies in order to promote their arms sales and to extend their political and military influence.

According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, Iran was one of the countries demonized by the major powers for manipulative purposes. Strongly pointing out that Iran's weapons acquisitions were markedly moderate and illustrative of purely defensive military planning, and that they had been necessitated by the Islamic Republic's equipment losses in the Iran–Iraq war and by the Islamic Republic's turbulent security environment, Iranian authorities maintained that developing countries like their own were not responsible for world-wide proliferation and build-up of conventional armaments.

While pointing out that the international community should actually help Third World states to produce conventional weapons domestically so that they would be able to independently defend themselves, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also

called for the adoption of international supply-side arms control measures that would be directed at the major powers' weapons production and export activities. Apart from seeking to *influence the major powers' arms policies* – an objective emanating not only from the Islamic Republic's security considerations but from its ideology- and prestige-related calculations as well – Iranian authorities continued to call for global reduction of military budgets and weapons procurement.

6.1.5 The Khatami presidency

The election of Muhammad Khatami as the fifth Iranian president in May 1997 led the Islamic Republic to review its foreign policy. Under the leadership of its reformist, domestically highly popular president, Iran took a further step towards improving its relations with the outside world. President Khatami and his lieutenants believed that their country's reintegration into the community of states would not succeed without a conciliatory diplomacy convincing the international community of the Islamic Republic's willingness to distance itself from a confrontational foreign policy course. The revision of the Islamic Republic's approach to foreign affairs was thus regarded by the Iranian reformists as a key to strengthening their country's security and prestige and to advancing its political, economic, and ideological interests.

The Khatami administration's determination to calibrate Iran's foreign policy orientation crystallized in the diplomatic catchword of "dialogue among civilizations." With this diplomatic slogan, the Iranians signalled that they wanted to change international circumstances by embarking on a dialogue with foreign governments and other international actors rather than by categorically rejecting and actively objecting to what they considered antithetical to the interests and the ideological outlook of the Islamic Republic. Yet, at the same time, the Khatami administration also made it known that its conciliatory approach to foreign policy did not mean that Iran's reformist government would compromise the dignity, wisdom, and interests of the Iranian nation.

The Islamic Republic's new argumentation extended its influence to all sectors of the Iranian foreign policy, including the country's arms control diplomacy. The introduction of the concept of "global security networking" was illustrative of the Khatami administration's effort to propagate its reformist rhetoric in support of the realization of the Islamic Republic's arms control objectives. Iranian representatives referred to the concept as the "security interpretation of the concept of dialogue among

civilizations" and argued that global security networking would promote inter-state cooperation and ensure that all states would have a chance to safeguard their national security.

Although the Khatami administration's arms control operations relied on a diplomatic message that stressed the importance of cooperation and collective action among governments, in the end, the notion of global security networking was yet another Iranian response to what the leaders of the Islamic Republic viewed as the major powers' unjust domination of the international system. The Khatami administration's commitment to opposing such domination became evident from the manner in which it repeated the Islamic Republic's traditional conventional arms control demands – driven by a combination of security, power, and ideological considerations – which aimed at *imposing limits on states' and especially the major powers' military expenditures, arms arsenals, weapons transfers, and arms production.*[7] And while expressing Iran's continuing support for the UN Conventional Arms Register, which the Iranians considered a preliminary international mechanism towards the substantive conventional arms control measures they were calling for, the Khatami government did not refrain from criticizing the register's inability to restrain the major powers' conventional arms transfers or from arguing that the register's scope should include WMD as well.

As far as the Persian Gulf region was concerned, the Khatami government recognized that the Rafsanjani administration's post-Iran-Iraq war efforts to improve the ties between their country and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms had not produced the results hoped for. Therefore, in order to satisfy its security, power, economic, and ideological aspirations in the Gulf region, the Khatami government actively signalled its desire to enter a new phase in Iranian-GCC relations. Here, too, the Islamic Republic's reformists believed that conciliatory diplomatic signals coming out of Tehran would open the door for increased inter-state communication and interaction in the Persian Gulf.

Given that mutual security concerns continued to constitute the biggest obstacle to improved Iranian-GCC relations, the Khatami government considered arms control diplomacy an indispensable element of its Gulf strategy. And instead of focusing on undermining the security relations between GCC states and Western powers, as Iran had done after the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, the representatives of the Khatami

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[7] The global elements of Iran's argumentation on conventional arms control under president Khatami can also been seen as a manifestation of the Islamic Republic's effort to *deflect diplomatic pressure from the foreign governments worried about Iran's conventional weapons programs* which were regarded in Tehran as essential to Iran's security and regional influence.

administration concentrated on *promoting security cooperation with the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms*. In other words, Iran wanted to portray itself as a constructive actor in the region and to distance itself from the role of a regional spoiler taking every opportunity to challenge prevailing political and security circumstances in the Persian Gulf.

To be sure, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations continued to rest on the premise and demand that foreign military forces should withdraw from the Persian Gulf and that the regional states alone should carry the responsibility for safeguarding Gulf security. The Khatami administration criticized the close security cooperation between GCC states and Western goverments, called on the Gulf states to cut their military spending, underlined the necessity of the creation of an indigenous regional security system, and expressed Iran's interest in signing defence pacts with GCC countries. Simultaneously, however, Iranian authorities openly recognized that the transformation of the existing security order in the Persian Gulf would most probably take place only gradually. Consequently, by seeking to build on the rudimentary security cooperation steps taken by Iran and GCC states during the Rafsanjani presidency, the Khatami government tried to reshape the regional order in an incremental manner.

At a general level, Iranian officials used multilateral arms control fora and bilateral talks with the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms to point out that their country was willing to develop security relations with their Arab neighbours. The Iranians asserted that the Islamic Republic had no military ambitions in the region and that Iran's weapons acquisitions served only defensive purposes. The representatives of the Islamic Republic also declared that their government would warmly welcome and consider any initiative put forward by the regional states to strengthen peace and security in the Persian Gulf.

Apart from these general Iranian remarks, the Khatami administration attempted to use CBM as a means to overcome the prevailing distrust between the Islamic Republic and its Gulf Arab neighbours and thereby to lay the foundation for strengthening Iranian-GCC security relations. Iran's efforts yielded mixed results. On the one hand, the Islamic Republic made strides in developing security cooperation with Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Oman remained the most fertile ground for Iran's diplomatic overtures, and the two countries implemented a set of mutual CBM, including naval port visits and the observation of military exercises. The security talks between Iran and Kuwait, in turn, centered, to the disappointment of the Islamic Republic, around low-security issues and resulted in the signing, in October 2000, of a bilateral agreement

dealing with drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime. The Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia signed a corresponding agreement in April 2001, in addition to which the security talks between the two states resulted in the application of mutual CBM, such as naval port visits and the exchange of military delegations and attachés.

On the other hand, the Khatami administration's security interaction with Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates was confined merely to bilateral talks. None of the three GCC states responded to Iran's calls for concrete security cooperation, and even those GCC governments that agreed to implement joint security measures with the Islamic Republic declined Iranian offers for steps that would have gone beyond CBM. Thus, for example, no GCC government was interested in joint military training and exercises with the Iranians who changed the code-names of their naval war games in order to signal their peaceful military intentions and who argued that joint Iranian-GCC military exercises would have proven wrong the perception, fuelled by the enemies of the Islamic Republic, that Iran was a threat to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. Similarly, GCC governments ignored the Islamic Republic's calls for full regional participation in the UN Conventional Arms Register. Ultimately, however, the mere fact that GCC states – and especially Saudi Arabia, the leading GCC power – were ready to engage in security cooperation, however limited, with the Islamic Republic marked a small victory for the Khatami government's arms control operations.

6.1.6 The issue of micro-disarmament

The rise of the question of micro-disarmament – that is, the control of anti-personnel mines and other types of small arms – on the international diplomatic agenda after the end of the Cold War was a prime example of an arms control issue that was imposed on Iran by external actors and circumstances. The shift in the nature of warfare in the post-Cold War world from inter-state to internal conflicts, and the consequential desire of the international community to prevent or at least ameliorate the devastating humanitarian consequences of the organized violence taking place within states, forced countries like Iran, fully occupied with their own domestic problems, to forge diplomatic positions on issues that were of secondary interest to them.

As expected, then, the Islamic Republic's initial reaction to the subject of micro-disarmament was one of indifference. But as the question continued to gain international momentum in the course of the 1990s, Iranian authorities understood that

they had to be more proactive in order to be able to defend their interests in the matter. There were three main sets of objectives – combined with the general Iranian position that the control of conventional weaponry was inferior in importance to WMD arms control – that eventually guided the Islamic Republic's diplomatic approach to micro-disarmament. First, as a producer and exporter of APM and other kinds of small arms, Iran was determined to try to *torpedo any international measure that would set limits to the activities of its arms industry*. Secondly, Iran's arms control officials attempted to *ensure that no international steps would be taken to limit states' right to produce and use small arms for the maintenance of their security*, whether external or internal. Finally, given that Iran's leaders viewed small arms transfers as a way to advance their foreign policy objectives, the representatives of the Islamic Republic sought to *hamper any international effort that would limit its ability to influence political developments outside its borders through arms transfers*.[8]

As a consequence, when it came to the issue of APM, Iranian officials – while acknowledging the dire humanitarian consequences of uncleared landmines and calling for the implementation of international mine-clearance projects in the contaminated regions of the world – refrained from acceding to diplomatic instruments that would have controlled the use, production, and transfer of such weapons. Thus, the Islamic Republic did not join the Mine-Ban Treaty of December 1997 and neither did it become a party to Protocol II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention of 1981 or to that treaty's Amended Protocol II, both of which were designed to protect civilians from landmines in international armed conflicts and not to ban the use of APM in itself.

Iran defended its mine stands in international fora by stressing that beside the obvious humanitarian aspect, there was a military dimension to the landmine issue as well. The representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that numerous states viewed APM as indispensable to their national security and reserved their own country the right to use landmines until the emergence of a military technology that would provide a serious alternative to such weapons or until governments would manage to draft a universally acceptable instrument banning APM. In addition to maintaining that Iran's long borders and its unstable external security environment forced their country to rely on landmines, the officials of the Islamic Republic also noted that Iran needed landmines to tackle the problem of drug trafficking from neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of course,

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[8] Naturally, Iranian officials did not publicly subscribe to this objective which was in stark contrast with the Islamic Republic's general argumentation on conventional arms control.

what the Iranians left unsaid was that the same APM used for crime control simultaneously served as a tool to stop illegal immigration to Iran as well as to prevent those individuals determined to undermine the central government in Tehran from entering the country.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to divert international attention away from its diplomacy of procrastination, its production of APM, as well as from its use of such weapons for military and foreign policy purposes, the Islamic Republic took unilateral arms control steps that pertained to its production and exportation of APM. First, the Iranians declared their intention to halt the production of such weapons and, secondly, they announced, in November 1998, that their country had imposed a moratorium on the export of Iranian-manufactured anti-personnel mines. Yet the fact that mines produced in the Islamic Republic continued to be detected outside Iranian borders seriously undermined the credibility of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic steps and suggested that the Iranian declarations had essentially been cosmetic efforts to court the international opinion.

While seeking to safeguard its security, power, and economic interests in the mine issue by means of a defensive diplomacy, the Islamic Republic also tried to make the most out of the international mine debate, in which it only reluctantly participated, by seeking to reap at least some benefits from the multilateral diplomatic activities around the issue. In practice, the officials of the Islamic Republic pursued the objective of *obtaining international assistance to relieve the landmine problem in Iran*, first of all, by using multilateral diplomatic fora to discuss and present the characteristics and the consequences of the Iranian mine problem which was mainly confined to the western parts of the country, that is, to the regions that had served as theaters of war in the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq conflict.

Secondly, the Iranians used the same diplomatic arenas to call on the international community to help Iran and other developing states in mine-detection and mine-clearance. On the one hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that countries that had laid landmines in foreign territories had a responsibility to provide maps, records, and other relevant documentation to mine-infested states as well as to the UN so that the affected countries could implement national mine-clearance programs. On the other hand, Iranian officials were highly critical of international restrictions that prevented mine-infected states from acquiring modern mine-clearance technology – which, of course, could be used for military purposes as well – from developed

countries. The Islamic Republic condemned such controls as "discriminatory and unjustified" and called for their abolition and for international technological and financial assistance to countries suffering from mine contamination.

Finally, Iran took preliminary steps with international partners to alleviate the country's landmine problem and welcomed any additional help in this respect from the UN, individual governments, and NGO. Simultaneously, however, the representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that because mine-clearance was a humanitarian enterprise, mine-related collaboration between foreign parties and mine-infested states should not be made dependent on preconditions or commitments required from the latter and that such cooperation should not be used as a pretext to interfere with mine-infested countries' internal affairs.

Following the footsteps of the Islamic Republic's mine diplomacy, Iran's activities in the area of small arms control similarly focused on ensuring that the Islamic Republic's ability to produce, export, transfer, and use such weapons would not be undermined by an on-going international arms control debate. Hence, even though the Iranians soon distanced themselves from their initially critical position on small arms control – which stressed that small arms control should not divert governments' attention away from the fact that WMD arms control was the most important theme on the international arms control agenda – and participated in the UN-led efforts to tackle the problem of small arms, the Islamic Republic – like many other countries, for that matter – defined the problem as essentially consisting of illicit small arms trading. That the Iranians showed no interest in the planned UN Firearms Protocol – an instrument which was adopted in May 2001 and which would have complicated Iran's efforts to pursue its foreign policy objectives through small arms transfers to non-state actors – illustrated, for its part, that the Islamic Republic strictly avoided any diplomatic arrangements in the area of small arms control that would have conflicted with its interests.

When discussing the issue of illicit small arms trade, Iranian representatives used the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan as a textbook example of the dire consequences of such trade and further stressed that illicit small arms trading was inseparably linked with the phenomena of drug trafficking and terrorism. Noting that Iran, too, had suffered from the use of illicit small arms, especially by drug traffickers operating in the eastern border regions of the country, the officials of the Islamic Republic called for diplomatic measures against illicit small arms trade both at the international and the regional level.

6.2 Chemical Arms Control: Objectives, Actions, and Means

6.2.1 The war years

Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq war was a crucial factor in leading post-revolutionary Iran to adopt an active diplomatic course in the area of arms control. For one thing, Iran's powerlessness in the face of Iraq's chemical warfare prompted the leaders of the Islamic Republic to shift their focus from ideologically coloured foreign policy objectives to issues that concretely threatened the interests of their country and to recognize that the securing of those interests required Iranian participation in multilateral diplomacy. For another, Iran's war-time experience as a victim of chemical warfare convinced the already security-obsessed leaders of the Islamic Republic that the use of both conventional armaments and WMD by foreign powers posed a constant threat to Iran's national security as well as to the country's Islamic regime. Therefore, Iran's leaders recognized that the steps taken by the Islamic Republic to strengthen its military preparedness needed to be complemented with an active arms control diplomacy.

Iraq's first major use of chemical weapons against Iran took place in the summer of 1983, and the number of Iraq's chemical attacks increased during the rest of that year. Militarily unable to prevent Iraq from waging chemical warfare against their country, the authorities of the Islamic Republic, concerned over the security implications of Iraq's chemical attacks, launched a major diplomatic effort, lasting the whole of the war period, to *persuade the international community to stop Iraq's use of chemical weapons*. In the course of 1983, Iranian officials tried to pursue this objective by bringing Iraq's chemical attacks to the attention of the UN Security Council and the world organization's secretary-general. The Iranians called on the secretary-general to verify the accuracy of the Iranian reports and declared their readiness to provide evidence of Iraq's chemical warfare to his representatives.

The fact that the UN more or less ignored the Islamic Republic's diplomatic actions and pleas was a major source of frustration for Iranian authorities. The Iranians vented their anger especially at the Security Council and maintained that the council's inaction with regard to Iraq's chemical warfare testified to a pro-Iraqi bias and made the council partially responsible for Iraq's actions. The Islamic Republic also directly accused the Soviet Union and France – two key supporters of Saddam Hussein and two of the five

permanent members of the Security Council – of supplying Iraq with chemical armaments.

In the course of 1984, following Iraq's escalation of its chemical weapons use, Iran was forced to intensify its diplomatic efforts against Iraq's chemical attacks. The representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to publicize detailed information about Iraq's attacks on international fora and hoped that such information would prompt the international community to react to the Iraqi breaches of international law. The Iranians also continued to call on the UN secretary-general to validate their claims of Iraq's chemical warfare. In March 1984, responding to a formal request made by the Islamic Republic, the secretary-general finally sent a specialist group on a fact-finding mission to Iran. Even though the UN experts, to Iran's great disappointment, failed to establish Iraq's culpability for the use of chemical weapons, the fact that the expert group had at least verified the use of mustard gas and tabun in the areas inspected in Iran provided diplomatic ammunition for the Islamic Republic's subsequent arms control operations.

In a further attempt to mobilize world opinion against Iraq's chemical crimes, Iranian officials regularly pointed to the dire humanitarian implications of Iraq's chemical attacks. Stressing that it was their religious duty to expose the humanitarian consequences of Iraq's criminal behaviour, the representatives of the Islamic Republic published and distributed information about Iranian chemical fatalities as well as about the physical and psychological symptoms suffered by Iran's chemical casualties. Also, the Iranians provided opportunities for foreign observers – diplomats, journalists, and medical experts – to meet Iranian chemical warfare victims both in Iran and abroad.

The argument that the credibility of international law and particularly that of the 1925 Geneva Protocol was seriously threatened by Iraq's chemical crimes constituted a central theme in Iran's chemical diplomacy. The representatives of the Islamic Republic warned that governments' reluctance to put an end to Iraq's actions would increase the risk that other states, too, would start to disregard the stipulations of the Geneva Protocol and ignore the distinction between chemical and conventional armaments. And even more dangerously, the Iranians added, international inaction with respect to Iraq could lower the threshold for the employment of nuclear weapons in future conflicts.

The fact that Iran's diplomatic calls continued to evoke little reaction from foreign governments and especially from the major powers, which viewed Iraq's chemical crimes as a lesser evil than the radical Iranian regime's advances on the war front, led

the Islamic Republic to declare that it was faced with an international "conspiracy of silence." Iranian officials criticized above all the UN Security Council's inaction in the Iraq case and maintained that the council's permanent members had effectively encouraged the Iraqis to continue their chemical assaults.

By the same token, Iranian authorities categorically rejected the notion linking the international curtailment of Iraq's use of chemical weapons to Iran's willingness to end the war. According to the Islamic Republic, the acceptance of such a linkage would signal that the use of WMD did not constitute a serious enough matter to be dealt with independently and that it was acceptable for states to try to extract political concessions through the use of WMD. The officials of the Islamic Republic accused countries like the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of having supplied and promoted Iraq's chemical weapons program and called for immediate international measures to stop the transfers of chemical armaments and technology to Iraq. Also, the Iranians asked the UN secretary-general to conduct a detailed investigation to determine which governments had contributed to Iraq's chemical weapons program.

The Islamic Republic's criticism of the state of international chemical arms control extended to the Iranian argumentation on the planned international treaty to prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical armaments. In the Iranian view, the diplomatic deliberations on the CWC were a smokescreen behind which the major powers kept building up their chemical weapons arsenals and tried to advance their military and foreign policy interests. Still, the Iranians recognized that the diplomatic negotiations on the treaty would furnish them with a highly valuable arena to pursue the Iraq issue and, consequently, used the talks first and foremost as an instrument in their diplomatic campaign against Iraq's chemical warfare. Thus, for example, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that in order to safeguard the success of the planned international instrument, states needed to jointly rectify the harm done to international chemical disarmament by Iraq's gas warfare.

In the early stages of the CWC talks, Iran's negotiators focused on stressing that the planned treaty should result in the destruction of all existing chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities and that it should include an efficient verification mechanism. In addition, the Iranians were of the opinion that the CWC should contain a procedure for the collective punishment of those states that would violate the provisions of the treaty and further noted that the document should also include a system for

helping the victims of chemical warfare. Finally, the Islamic Republic's negotiators put forward the idea of the creation of a permanent CWC fact-finding team that could be mobilized at a short notice to investigate suspected cases of chemical weapons use.

In the course of 1985, Iranian officials continued to bring details of Iraq's chemical attacks to international attention and to call on states to take immediate measures to stop Iraq's chemical warfare. The Islamic Republic accused governments of "catastrophic and conspiratorial indifference" to Iraq's WMD use and pointed out that the application of international law could not be made conditional upon a cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war. The Iranians also called for the establishment of an international mechanism ensuring that states respect their obligations under international law and, more concretely, asked the UN, in the end unsuccesfully, to send a permanent expert mission to Tehran to investigate Iraq's use of chemical weapons. And while acknowledging the importance of the CWC, the officials of the Islamic Republic declared it to be astonishing that the same governments that were busy planning a future ban on chemical weapons did nothing to respond to Iraq's real-time gas warfare.

As a result of Iraq's large-scale employment of chemical weapons during 1986, Iranian officials continued to use international arms control fora to meticulously report on Iraq's chemical attacks and their consequences. The Iranians repeated their call for an immediate international intervention to stop Iraq's chemical warfare, maintained that Iraq's attacks were fuelled by "irresponsible attitudes on the part of certain countries," and emphasized that the Iraqi breaches of the Geneva Protocol seriously threatened the credibility of international law.

In March 1986, the Islamic Republic managed to score a minor diplomatic victory as the group of specialists appointed by the UN secretary-general concluded, after a visit to Iran, that Iraq had used chemical weapons against Iranian troops. The Islamic Republic's satisfaction with the fact that Iraq had been identified as culpable of the use of chemical armaments increased after the UN Security Council, on 21 March, issued a declaration in which it finally named and strongly condemned Iraq for violating the Geneva Protocol.

Still, at the end of the day, the Security Council's declaration had no impact on Iraq's behaviour on the battlefield. Faced with Iraq's poison gas attacks, the representatives of the Islamic Republic had to keep exploring diplomatic means to stop Iraq's chemical operations. In doing so, the Iranians called on foreign governments to put diplomatic pressure on Saddam Hussein and to impose a total ban on chemical exports to Iraq. The

Islamic Republic also renewed its demand for a UN investigation to identify the parties that had transferred chemical weapons and technology to Iraq as well as for the creation of a mechanism in which the UN secretary-general would dispatch an expert team to investigate Iraq's chemical weapons use whenever requested by the Iranian government. In addition, the Islamic Republic insisted that all states should declare chemical weapons use a war crime, proclaim their commitment to the Geneva Protocol and to the principle of non-first use of chemical weapons, and devote their diplomatic energies to the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world.

The issue of Iraq continued to heavily influence Iran's argumentation on the planned CWC, too. As before, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that it was more important for states to defend existing international regulations dealing with chemical weapons than to focus on the creation of a future ban on such armaments. Simultaneously, however, the Iranians called on governments to speed up the CWC negotiations so that the chemical treaty would be in place as soon as possible. As far as the individual CWC-related issues discussed in the negotiations were concerned, the representatives of the Islamic Republic mainly focused on questions that pertained to treaty compliance and verification.

During the final two years of the war, the content of Iran's chemical arms control operations remained essentially unchanged. In 1987, Iran's diplomatic argumentation was heavily influenced by Iraq's chemical attack, on 28 June, against the Iranian Kurdish town of Sardasht. The Islamic Republic used the Sardasht attack to point out that Iraq had intensified its chemical warfare both in quantitative and qualitative terms and that Iraq's conscious chemical targeting of civilian areas constituted the most worrying new aspect of its chemical operations. Outraged by the Sardasht incident, Iranian officials compared the Iraqi assault with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II and maintained that the events in Sardasht had revealed, in a tragic manner, the international community's shameful indifference towards Iraq's chemical crimes. According to Iran, Iraq's attack against Sardasht was without precedent in the history of contemporary warfare and, in fact, the first time in the history of mankind that a populated town had been attacked with chemical weapons.

In the course of 1988, Iranian leaders' concerns over Iraq's gas warfare only deepened. Iraq`s massive use of poison gas to support its ground offensives, together with the Iraqi regime`s threat to launch chemical missile attacks against Iranian cities and its use of chemical weapons against its own citizens in the Kurdish town of Halabja

in March 1988, prompted Iranian authorities' to intensify their arms control operations against Iraq's chemical warfare. Relying on the whole repertoire of their earlier chemical diplomacy and seeking to maximize the propaganda value of the dramatic events in Halabja, the officials of the Islamic Republic tried to persuade the international community to take preventive and punitive measures against the regime of Saddam Hussein.

During the final year of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic also intensified its diplomacy in the CWC talks and called for the conclusion of the negotiations at the earliest possible time. Just like during the earlier phases of the talks, Iranian representatives mainly focused on compliance- and verification-related treaty issues, in addition to which they maintained that due to the exceptional importance of the planned chemical treaty, governments should make their utmost to secure its universality. For the same reason, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that states should waive, in the case of the CWC, their traditional right to withdraw from international agreements.

The fact that Iran pursued its own chemical weapons program during the 1980–1988 war suggests that apart from the effort to stop Iraq's gas warfare, Iran's chemical arms control operations may have had a secondary objective at the time as well, namely, that of *legitimizing the Islamic Republic's own potential use of chemical weapons against Iraq*. In other words, it is possible that Iran's active diplomatic reporting on Iraq's chemical activities and its strong criticism of the international community's indifference in the face of Iraq's gas warfare were partly intended for preparing the diplomatic ground for the Islamic Republic's own subsequent use of chemical armaments.

It is true that the Iranians did not manage to develop a militarily significant arsenal of chemical weapons during the 1980–1988 war. However, when launching their chemical weapons program in response to Iraq's gas warfare in the early 1980s, the leaders of the Islamic Republic did not know how long the war would last or what ultimate role chemical armaments would play in the war equation. Therefore, the Iranians, who occasionally warned of the possibility of in-kind retaliations against Iraq's chemical strikes, may have concluded that they needed to take anticipatory measures to reduce the negative diplomatic implications that would arise should the Islamic Republic manage to create a chemical weapons capability matching that of Iraq's and should it decide to make use of such a capability on the battlefield.

The issue of Iran's use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq conflict itself is controversial. Even though Iraq and some other countries – including the United States.

Israel, and Egypt – accused Iran of the use of poison gas during the war,[9] an accusation that has always been categorically denied by Iranian authorities, the existing research literature on the subject has not confirmed the accuracy of such claims. Hiltermann (2007: 156), for example, argues that there is no convincing evidence that the Iranians, who explained their commitment to non-use of chemical weapons mainly by references to religious and humanitarian considerations, ever used chemical warfare agents in the war. And even the scholars who maintain that Iran did resort to chemical warfare during the 1980–1988 conflict agree that the Islamic Republic's use of poison gas was both rare and highly limited in scope. According to such observers, the chemical weapons employed by the Islamic Republic included artillery rounds and mortar shells captured from Iraq and probably also some Iranian-made weapons. As far as the date of Iran's first alleged employment of chemical warfare agents against Iraq is concerned, analysts provide conflicting information. Whereas some place the date at 1984 or 1985, others believe that Iran first resorted to the use of poison gas only in the latter phases of the war, that is, in 1987 or 1988. (Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 2006: 27–28; Karsh 1993: 40 and Eisenstadt 1998: 2)

6.2.2 The immediate post-war period

In many respects, Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war was a dramatic experience for the Islamic Republic. Iraq's chemical warfare not only caused major problems for Iran on the battlefield, but it also significantly contributed to the Iranian leadership's bitter decision to accept a cease-fire in July 1988. And even after the end of the war, Iraq's chemical capabilities continued to be viewed in Tehran as a pressing threat to Iran's national security. The thousands of Iranian war veterans still suffering from the health consequences of Iraq's chemical warfare acted as a constant reminder of the danger posed by the Iraqi capabilities.

Following the war, then, Iran most probably continued to improve its own chemical weapons capabilities in order to deter future uses of such armaments against the Islamic Republic. But even though the authorities of the Islamic Republic felt that their country had been left alone in the face of Iraq's war-time WMD use and that governments, by

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[9] Iranian Kurdish rebels have also been among those who have accused the Islamic Republic of chemical weapons use during the Iran–Iraq conflict. According to various rebel sources, Iran employed poison gas against its Kurdish insurgents in 1982, 1983, and again in 1987. However, the validity of such claims remains questionable. (Hiltermann 2007: 162–165)

favouring Saddam Hussein, had sacrificed international law for political expediency, they did not abandon their resolute multilateral diplomacy in the area of chemical arms control. On the contrary, in the aftermath of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic actively sought to *neutralize the Iraqi chemical threat* through diplomatic means.

Iran's post-war arms control operations against Iraq's chemical weapons consisted of four elements. First of all, the Iranians continued to level criticism at governments' war-time indifference towards Iraq's gas warfare. The representatives of the Islamic Republic argued that the international inaction had fuelled Iraq's chemical attacks, resulted in immense humanitarian suffering, and dramatically increased the threat of chemical weapons to international and regional security. The Iranians also stressed that there were no longer any excuses left for governments not to deal with the danger posed by Iraq's chemical capabilities. Secondly, the officials of the Islamic Republic called on governments to take steps to achieve the global elimination of chemical weapons and, pending the completion of the CWC, implement a set of substitutive measures, such as mandating an impartial international study on chemical warfare in the Iran–Iraq war, pledging that they would not use chemical weapons under any circumstances, and banning transfers of chemical materials and technology for the production of chemical armaments. In addition, the Iranians demanded that the international community should develop a capacity to rapidly act upon any allegation of chemical weapons use and apply punitive measures against states resorting to gas warfare.

The third element of Iran's post-war diplomatic campaign against Iraq's chemical weapons consisted of the Islamic Republic's argumentation in the CWC negotiations. Iranian officials called for the creation of a strong international instrument that would include an intrusive verification mechanism, be of unlimited duration, and leave no room for differing interpretations. The Iranians, who constantly stressed the importance of the planned treaty's universality, dismissed out of hand the proposal that states possessing chemical weapons should be allowed to retain a small part of their arsenal until all countries capable of producing chemical armaments would become parties to the CWC. In the same vein, the Islamic Republic objected to the idea that the treaty members in possession of chemical armaments should be given a transition period of 10 years to destroy their weapons. The Iranians were also of the opinion that the destruction of the world's chemical weapons arsenals ought to be started by the countries with the largest stockpiles and by the states with a record of chemical weapons use.

Moreover, Iran's CWC negotiators emphasized that the convention should include a mechanism to punish states that resort to the use of toxic weapons as well as a mechanism to help the countries that are victims of chemical warfare or subject to the threat of chemical weapons use. In both cases, the representatives of the Islamic Republic pointed out, the treaty mechanisms should be activated automatically without any prior consultations or political calculations. After the end of the Iran–Iraq war, Iran's CWC negotiators also started to devote attention to article XI of the draft treaty which dealt with the economic and technological development of the states parties as well as with international cooperation in the field of non-military chemical activities. Reflective of the Islamic Republic's post-war reconstruction efforts, and most probably also of the Iranian intention to gain a better access to the technology, equipment, and materials needed for the production of chemical weapons, the Iranians argued that the planned treaty should facilitate economic and technological cooperation between developed and developing countries and lead to the abolishment of all controls on chemical transfers that have not been agreed on within the CWC framework.

Finally, the Islamic Republic's concern over Iraq's chemical capabilities manifested itself in Iranian argumentation on chemical arms control in the regional context. The Iranians, though fully aware of the hurdles before the materialization of such a development, called for a broad Middle Eastern participation in the planned CWC. Unlike the great majority of the Arab governments, Iran did not link its participation in the chemical treaty with Israel's relinquishing of its nuclear weapons arsenal, and neither did Iran define Iraq's CWC membership as a prerequisite to its own treaty accession. Furthermore, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that pending the completion of the CWC and Middle Eastern countries' full participation in the future convention, the regional states should scrupulously observe the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Iranian representatives also referred to the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone and, more broadly, of a zone free of all WMD in the Middle East as a solution to the problems caused by the region's WMD.

As far as the Gulf sub-region was concerned, the Iranians called for regional consultations, under the umbrella of the UN Security Council resolution 598, on measures to enhance Gulf security. Yet, the officials of the Islamic Republic also pointed out that, at the time being, the establishment of a regional security system in the region was subordinate to the more urgent objective of chemical disarmament in the Gulf. The Iranians stressed that their own country continued to be committed to that

objective and maintained that although Iran had possessed all the means to produce chemical weapons on a large scale and to use them extensively in retaliation in the course of the war, it had never resorted to the use of poison gas. The officials of the Islamic Republic declared that Iran's post-war policy against chemical weapons was based on diplomacy, and especially on the planned CWC, and not on a national chemical weapons arsenal.

6.2.3 From the Gulf conflict to the signing of the CWC

As a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and its subsequent defeat in the brief war of January–February 1991 with the U.S.-led coalition forces, Iraq's chemical weapons ceased to be an urgent matter in Iran's arms control diplomacy. The creation, in April 1991, of UNSCOM to verify the post-Gulf conflict destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons capabilities enabled Iranian officials to place added emphasis on the CWC negotiations and to approach the talks from a perspective not dictated by the concrete Iraqi threat. Nevertheless, Iranian authorities' war-time experiences continued to heavily steer their approach to the planned chemical treaty. Thus, the Iranians sought to *achieve a carefully defined convention which would lead to rapid disarmament of chemical weapons and oblige the member states to immediately respond to future cases of chemical weapons use*.

In their effort to realize this objective, which was driven above all by Iranian security considerations, the officials of the Islamic Republic called, in the first place, for the creation of a convention which would have a universal membership and whose provisions would not enable the states parties to reach conflicting conclusions about the treaty`s content. Security calculations also led the Islamic Republic to express its dissatisfaction with article II of the draft convention which, Iranian negotiators pointed out, lacked a clear definition of the munitions, devices, and equipment regarded as chemical weapons, excluded herbicides as a means of warfare, and failed to sufficiently limit the employment of riot control chemical agents to domestic use only. Similarly, Iran expressed its dissatisfaction with articles IV and V of the draft convention because they allowed for the possible extension of the duration of the chemical weapons destruction period and the conversion of chemical weapons production facilities without identifying a qualitative order of destruction.

Furthermore, the Iranians were unhappy about the fact that under article X of the draft treaty, dealing with international assistance and protection against chemical weapons, the coordination and delivery of protection to the states parties would not take place automatically but would leave room for what the Iranians characterized as "political misuse." The Islamic Republic's CWC negotiators referred to the lack of the principle of automaticity also in connection with treaty discussions that concerned the measures that would be taken, under article XII of the CWC, by the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW to ensure compliance with the convention and to redress and remedy a situation that contravened the treaty's provisions.

As before, Iran continued to support the creation of an efficient verification mechanism for the CWC. After the Gulf conflict, however, the Islamic Republic's argumentation on CWC verification became increasingly tinged with reservations. Iran's representatives objected to what they referred to as "excessive verification" and maintained that undue interference in routine chemical industry activities would reduce the states parties' confidence in the convention. The Iranians also insisted that the CWC's verification system should not be used for malicious purposes, that is, for exposing the states parties' military or commercial secrets. Finally, Iranian officials stressed the importance of a cost-effective verification mechanism that would not financially burden the member states.

The Islamic Republic's worries about undue interference in peaceful chemical activities was indicative of the Iranian authorities' effort to *achieve a CWC which would also advance chemical industry activities in their country*. The negotiators of the Islamic Republic pursued this second major Iranian CWC-related diplomatic objective by arguing that the future convention should in no way impede the states parties' economic and technological development. Instead, the Iranians argued, the states parties' participation in the treaty should be rewarded in the form of international aid and assistance in the field of peaceful chemical activities. The officials of the Islamic Republic also demanded that there should be no "discriminatory restrictions" on chemical trade and technology transfers between the member states. The Iranians expressly referred to the export controls of the Australia Group and called for their abolition once the CWC had entered into force. Just like the Islamic Republic's overall

argumentation on article XI of the planned treaty, this Iranian stand primarily stemmed from welfare considerations, from the desire to develop Iran's post-war economy.[10]

The Islamic Republic's post-Gulf conflict statements on chemical arms control in the regional Middle Eastern context followed a familiar Iranian line of argumentation. Iranian officials stressed the importance of all Middle Eastern countries' participation in the planned CWC and called on the international community to address the regional states' security concerns so that they would accede to the treaty. The Iranians argued that Israel constituted the biggest obstacle to Middle Eastern governments' treaty accession and maintained that unless Israel adhered to the NPT, put its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, and joined the BTWC, major Arab states would not join the CWC. However, unlike the Arab governments, the Islamic Republic continued to refrain from categorically coupling the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons to regional chemical arms control.

Apart from using its chemical diplomacy to pursue the objective of *broad Middle Eastern participation in the CWC*, the Iranians – who defined the CWC as a milestone towards a Middle Eastern WMDFZ and had an obvious security, as well as a power-political, interest in calling for Middle Eastern states' WMD disarmament[11] – argued that, in the aftermath of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, there was an urgent need for the Persian Gulf countries to take joint steps in the control of chemical armaments and other WMD. The Islamic Republic's attempts to *promote chemical arms control-related cooperation between the regional governments* were linked with the general Iranian effort to further security cooperation between the Gulf countries and to undermine foreign powers' military and political presence in the region.

The final draft of the CWC was adopted by the CD on 3 September 1992. Iran delayed the treaty's adoption by linking its acceptance of the document to the issue of the composition of the OPCW's Executive Council, the 41-member organ responsible for the promotion of the execution of, and compliance with, the convention. In the Islamic Republic's view, the draft treaty's provisions dealing with the council's composition, based on the division of the member states into geographical groupings as

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[10] Of course, it is possible, as discussed below, that Iran's argumentation on matters pertaining to article XI of the CWC also stemmed from security considerations, namely, from the Islamic Republic's attempt to *use the CWC as a tool to promote its chemical weapons program*.

[11] Iranian officials themselves like to point out that thanks to their country's geography, vast natural resources, and large population, Iran's security would generally benefit from a Middle Eastern military scene without WMD (author's interviews with Iranian arms control officials [C] and [D] who wish to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

well as on the principle of rotating membership, discriminated against states like Iran that belonged to the group of Asian countries with a large membership.

The Islamic Republic's concern over its chances to influence the work of the Executive Council also explained why Iranian negotiators objected to the treaty provision stating that four of the Asian group countries chosen to the council should be states parties with the most significant national chemical industry in the region. According to the Iranians, the application of such a criterion would create a discriminatory system of priviledged or quasi-permanent seats in the council. In the end, however, the Islamic Republic agreed to the existing treaty provisions on the Executive Council, but only on the condition that the issue would be discussed again in the future. As one of the original signatories of the CWC, Iran signed the treaty on 13 January 1993.

6.2.4 The implementation of the CWC

After the completion of the CWC, hailed by the Iranians as a major diplomatic achievement, the Islamic Republic's chemical arms control operations focused, first of all, on *pursuing changes in what Iranian authorities viewed as the deficiencies of the CWC treaty text*. There were a number of issues that were raised by the Islamic Republic's representatives in this context. For example, the Iranians used international arms control fora to express their worry that the expenses resulting from CWC verification would be transferred into the prices of chemical industry products and thereby increase the costs of developing countries' chemical imports. Similarly, the officials of the Islamic Republic voiced their concern over the OPCW's financial ability to help, under article X of the CWC, the member states to protect themselves against chemical weapons.

These Iranian economic and security concerns aside, Iran's representatives, hoping to secure their country's participation in the work of the OPCW's Executive Council, continued to criticize and demand a change in the "unbalanced and discriminatory" way in which the council's members were chosen. In addition to pointing out that it was comparatively harder for the Asian states parties to obtain a seat in the council, the Iranians objected to the industry principle which provided a priviledged status to the member states with major chemical industries. In the Iranian view, it was the countries

whose security depended on the CWC that needed an ensured representation in the council.

Iran also continued to call for a detailed definition of what constituted a chemical weapon under article II of the treaty. The Iranians' diplomatic activity in the matter was motivated, on the one hand, by the concern that a vague definition would open up the possibility of CWC inspections being used to obtain information about the member states' military secrets. On the other hand, Iran sought to ensure that its post-Iran–Iraq war missile programs would not be challenged by the claim that the existence of Iranian conventional missiles that possessed a technical capability to carry chemical payloads automatically violated article II of the CWC.

Moreover, Iranian representatives were active in discussing matters pertaining to the implementation of article XI of the CWC. The Islamic Republic made strong calls for the abolition of the export controls of the Australia Group upon the entry into the force of the CWC by arguing that those controls violated the spirit and stipulations of the chemical treaty and seriously hampered economic, technological, and scientific development in the Third World. Iranian officials warned that the policies of the AG not only discouraged developing countries to sign the CWC, but also reduced the readiness of some CWC signatories to ratify the convention. In addition to implying that their own country's ratification of the CWC was dependent on the fate of the AG restrictions, the Iranians maintained that the members of the group had in fact agreed to do away with their export controls during the CWC negotiations. It was this agreement, the Iranians stressed, that had made the completion of the convention possible in the first place.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic argued that because the CWC obliged developed states to promote economic, scientific, and technological cooperation with developing countries, they should accept binding commitments to transfer chemical materials and technology, together with relevant scientific information, to the Third World. Iranian officials added that such transfers should be accompanied with financial and technical assistance to those member states of the CWC that were experiencing problems with the convention's practical implementation.

Seeking to present a solution to the controversy over AG export controls, the Islamic Republic proposed that the matter ought to be settled among the CWC states parties. Iran called for the establishment of an international arrangement under the convention to debate matters that pertained to the transfer of chemical materials, equipment, and

scientific information, and to the proliferation of chemical armaments. According to the Iranians, the proposed arrangement should guarantee that all CWC member states have an equal access to chemical imports. On the other hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic said that the states parties could agree on the application of export controls among themselves. However, such restrictions, the Iranians added, should apply only to states that were not members of the CWC. In the Iranian view, the comprehensive verification mechanism outlined in the CWC was effective enough to ensure that the states parties would respect their treaty obligations.

The Islamic Republic's argumentation on article XI testified to Iran's effort to *use the treaty to gain a better access to chemical imports* and thereby to improve its chemical industry capabilities. In addition to the peaceful economic motive, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations with regard to article XI may have had a military objective as well. The Iranians may have viewed the CWC as a means to procure chemical materials, equipment, and technology for their chemical weapons program.[12] While it is difficult to imagine that Iran would have unilaterally destructed its chemical weapons capabilities before the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict and even prior to the conclusion of the CWC,[13] the information in the research literature about the Islamic Republic's post-CWC activities in the field of chemical armaments is scarce, highly speculative, and almost exclusively based on U.S. intelligence reports.

According to the data suggesting that Iran was trying to conceal an active chemical weapons program in the 1990s, the Islamic Republic possessed a large undeclared stockpile of chemical armaments – in the form of chemical-filled artillery shells, bombs, and possibly ballistic missile warheads – and a substantial capability to produce such weapons. Iran is believed to have resolutely sought to improve its chemical weapons capability, both quantitatively and qualitatively, through the acquisition of technical knowledge, precursor chemicals, and process equipment from foreign suppliers. Throughout the 1990s, China reportedly acted as Iran's principal source of chemical

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[12] At the time, Iran observers often referred to the following statement made to a group of Iranian soldiers by president Rafsanjani in October 1988 as evidence of the Islamic Republic's interest in chemical weapons and other WMD: "We should fully equip ourselves with both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons. From now on you should make use of the opportunity and perform this task" (cited in Spector 1993: 143).

[13] It is reminded here that Iran admitted – in its classified declarations to the OPCW in November 1998 – to having pursued a chemical weapons program during the "last years" of the Iran–Iraq war. According to Iranian officials, their country terminated its program soon after the end of the war.

precursors and weapons production technology. The chemical warfare agents in Iran's possession reportedly consisted of blister, choking, blood, and possibly nerve agents.[14]

Whatever the actual nature and content of the Islamic Republic's post-CWC chemical activities,[15] the Iranians themselves categorically denied any interest in pursuing chemical weapons. Claiming that religious and humanitarian considerations prevented Iran from producing chemical weapons, the officials of the Islamic Republic also warned that baseless accusations against countries that strongly supported international arms control instruments could reduce those states' willingness to ratify the CWC.

As far as regional chemical arms control was concerned, Iranian officials, driven by security and power calculations, kept advocating the objective of *comprehensive chemical arms control in the Middle East*. As before, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation focused on Israel and named that country's policies, together with its WMD arsenal and especially its nuclear weapons, as the main obstacle to the materialization of the Iranian objective. Although it was not only Israel's WMD but the Arab WMD capabilities, too, that were the real target of Iran's chemical arms control operations, the Iranians concentrated on Israel because they believed that such an approach would bring them additional foreign policy benefits in the short run. For one thing, the Islamic Republic's criticism of Israel and its foreign allies were part of the Iranian effort to sustain its ideological credentials and to gain prestige in the Arab world, particularly among the Arab populations. For another thing, the Iranians hoped that their definition of Israel and its WMD as the common threat to the interests of the Islamic world would deflect Arab fears over the Islamic Republic's WMD intentions and also undermine the U.S.-led post-Gulf conflict efforts to achieve an Arab-Israeli peace and to create a new political order in the Middle East.

As for the Persian Gulf sub-region, the Iranians continued to try to *promote chemical arms control-related cooperation between the Gulf states* and raised specifically the

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[14] This paragraph relies on Binder (2008); Cordesman and Al-Rodhan (2006); Carus (2000); *Jane's Sentinel* (1999) and Eisenstadt (1998).

[15] Of course, based on the existing information available to analysts, the possibility that Iran, as subsequently alleged by the authorities of the Islamic Republic, destroyed its chemical weapons capabilities after the end of the Iran–Iraq war cannot be completely ruled out. Similarly, it is possible that, instead of an active weapons program, Iran merely sought to retain, under the terms of the CWC, a breakout capacity within its chemical industry to produce chemical warfare agents in the case of an emergency. It should be stressed here that the analysis of the Islamic Republic's WMD activities is beyond the scope of this study. By referring to existing research data on Iran's activities in the area of WMD, the present work only suggests that the Islamic Republic has probably used arms control diplomacy for protecting and advancing its WMD programs – a possibility which is privately acknowledged by Iranian arms control diplomats themselves (author's interview with an Iranian arms control official (C) who wishes to remain unidentified, summer 2002).

possibility of joint regional measures in the implementation and ratification of the CWC. In order to advance the Islamic Republic's security and power interests in the Gulf, Iranian officials also put forward the idea of gradual development of joint steps in the area of verification with the help of the UN. Iran's argumentation on regional chemical arms control, both in the Gulf and the broader Middle Eastern context, was accompanied with calls for the creation of a regional or sub-regional WMDFZ.

6.2.5 The ratification of the CWC and beyond

Iran's ratification of the CWC took place in July 1997. Although the ratification was a logical culmination of years of Iranian diplomacy against chemical weapons, there were forces within the Islamic Republic's political elite that objected to Iran's accession to the convention. According to the opponents of Iran's treaty membership, the CWC set dangerous limits on the Islamic Republic's military freedom of action. Arguing that Iran was surrounded by regional powers that were pursuing WMD capabilities, pointing to the dangers posed to their country by the major powers' WMD, and questioning the chemical convention's value in crisis situations, the Iranian opponents of the CWC concluded that the treaty would not serve the interests of the Islamic Republic.

Yet, it was the Iranian elite members who considered the treaty a beneficial instrument whose views were decisive in Iranian deliberations on CWC ratification. In Iranian CWC supporters' opinion, by prohibiting the production, stockpiling, and use of one category of WMD and by creating a mechanism to help the victims of chemical warfare, the treaty would bring major security benefits to the Islamic Republic. And in the end, Iranian supporters of the CWC argued, their country had no real alternative to CWC accession. In the first place, chemical weapons and other WMD were inhumane, against the laws of Islam, and thereby contrary to the religious convictions of the Iranian people. Secondly, the supporters of the CWC maintained, Iran's possession of chemical weapons and other WMD would make the country vulnerable to other states' military attacks as well as to international sanctions. Thirdly, by staying outside the CWC, Iran would lose an access to highly needed chemical imports and to the rights granted to the states parties under article XI of the treaty. Finally, Iranian supporters of the CWC pointed out that the Islamic Republic's treaty accession would help it to improve its international image by sending a strong signal to foreign governments that Iran was not pursuing chemical weapons.

According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, there were a number of reasons why it took nearly five years for Iran to ratify the CWC. These included the bureaucratic workload, the need to convince the sceptics within the Iranian elite of the treaty's benefits, as well as the fate of the United States' and Russia's national ratifications. However, it seems that, before all else, the Islamic Republic delayed its treaty ratification in order to use the issue as a trump card in its CWC diplomacy. The same motive most probably steered the Islamic Republic's behaviour in the context of its actual ratification decision, too. In its attempt to increase its influence in CWC-related diplomatic deliberations, Iran tried to *create the perception that it could withdraw from the CWC should its concerns over the treaty and its implementation be ignored in the future*.

The main tool used by the authorities of the Islamic Republic to achieve this objective was the Iranian parliament's declaration which was attached to Iran's CWC ratification instrument and which listed the conditions under which the Islamic Republic would reserve itself the right to withdraw, under article XVI of the CWC, from the convention. In the Majlis declaration, the Islamic Republic made it known that it would consider withdrawal from the treaty if the principle of equal treatment of all the states parties in the implementation of the convention would be violated, if confidential information provided to the OPCW would be disclosed contrary to the provisions of the CWC, and if restrictions incompatible with the obligations under the convention would be imposed upon the states parties.[16]

After depositing its CWC ratification instrument in November 1997, Iran was obliged, under article III of the CWC, to submit, within two months, its so-called initial declarations to the OPWC. And yet, the Iranian submission did not take place until November 1998. While the Iranians mainly argued that the delay had resulted from bureaucratic difficulties, it seems that the Islamic Republic wanted to use the issue as a way to signal its dissatisfaction with the CWC's implementation. It may also be that the delay was caused by intra-elite arm-wrestling over the content of the Iranian declarations.[17]

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[16] It should be noted here that apart from acting as a tool to strengthen Iran's diplomatic hand in international talks on chemical arms control, the Iranian parliament's CWC declaration could – theoretically at least – also serve as a legal escape hatch for the Iranians in case it would be established or Iranian authorities themselves would declare – for one reason or another – to be in possession of chemical armaments.

[17] Note in this connection, for example, the following oft-quoted comment – reported in the Iranian press in April 1998 and cited in Byman et al. (2001: 96–97) – made by the commander of the IRGC who

Whatever the case, Iran admitted in its classified declarations that it had pursued a chemical weapons program during the "last years" of the Iran–Iraq war. According to Iranian authorities, their country had possessed two chemical weapons production facilities which had provided Iranian armed forces with a "strictly limited" chemical weapons capability. The Iranians maintained that even though Iraq's readiness to escalate its chemical warfare to major Iranian population centers, together with the international community's disinterest in Iraq's war-time chemical weapons use, had forced the Islamic Republic to launch a chemical weapons program, their country had never actually used such armaments. The Iranians added that given that their country had never resorted to chemical warfare, it had been easy for them to give up the chemical weapons option soon after the Iran–Iraq war had ended. Although Iranian authorities did not, publicly at least, elaborate on when, where, and how they had destroyed the chemical weapons developed in the war period, they did officially declare to the OPCW, in November 1998, that Iran no longer was in possession of chemical armaments.

The OPCW's first inspection mission in the Islamic Republic was completed in February 1999. During the visit, which led the OPCW to conclude that Iran was in full compliance with its CWC obligations, Iran had destroyed its declared chemical weapons production plants in the presence of the inspectors, even though under article V of the CWC, it would have had ten years after the convention's entry into force to destroy the facilities. The officials of the Islamic Republic maintained that their country had made this gesture of good will in order to underscore its commitment to the CWC and to a policy of transparency.

The content of Iran's initial declarations and the Islamic Republic's actions during the OPCW's initial inspection suggest that they were part of an Iranian effort to *convince the international community that, in spite of persistent claims to the contrary, the Islamic Republic did not possess chemical weapons*. Iranian authorities categorically denied the validity of such claims and maintained, as they had done in their initial declarations to the OPCW, that their country had decided not to seek or produce chemical weapons in the future. As evidence of their country's peaceful intentions, the Iranians referred to the Islamic Republic's active chemical arms control diplomacy, to

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himself gave a negative answer to the question he posed: "Is it possible to save the Islamic Republic from threat of the U.S. and international Zionism by concluding agreements for prohibiting chemical and nuclear weapons and international conventions?"

its declaration of past possession of chemical weapons, as well as to the destruction of its chemical weapons production facilities far before the deadline set in the CWC and in the presence of international inspectors.

The question whether Iran's chemical arms control operations in this context were indicative of an attempt to reduce the security and economic costs resulting from the suspicions that the Islamic Republic had a chemical weapons program or actually of a conscious effort to *cover an on-going chemical weapons program* remains controversial.[18] The observers believing that the latter was the case refer to information according which Iran continued to seek foreign imports of chemical materials, expertise, and weapons production technology in order to create a more advanced and a self-sufficient chemical warfare infrastructure.[19] As before, most of the information incriminating the Islamic Republic is based on U.S. intelligence sources, even if the intelligence agencies of some other Western countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, have agreed with the U.S. conclusions.[20]

The efforts by the Iranian government, now led by the reformist president Muhammad Khatami, to convince the world of the Islamic Republic's commitment to the CWC consisted of traditional references to the Iranian stance that chemical weapons and other WMD were immoral and against Islamic law as well as of the Khatami administration's allusions to the notion of "global security networking." According to Iranian representatives, diplomatic cooperation based on that principle would pave the way for the adoption of a new, cooperative paradigm in international relations and thereby eliminate the need for chemical armaments and other WMD.

Moreover, the Iranian government pointed out that it would have nothing to hide should a CWC member state decide to launch a CWC challenge inspection against their country. On the contrary, Iranian authorities said, they would welcome any OPCW inspector to the Islamic Republic. At the same time, however, the Iranians stressed that the fact that no country had theretofore resorted to the CWC's challenge mechanism illustrated, in its own right, that those accusing Iran of WMD development had nothing to base their allegations on. Similarly, the Khatami government found it very unlikely

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[18] It is obviously also possible that the Iranians were pursuing the two objectives simultaneously.

[19] For data suggesting that Iran continued to pursue a chemical weapons program, see Eisenstadt (1998: 1–3 and 2001: 22) and Cordesman and Al-Rodhan (2006: 29–30, 32–36, 38).

[20] Of course, the validity of Western intelligence information cannot be verified by scholars who rely on open sources. It should be noted here that, since 2003, the United States has reduced the scope and certainty of its claims regarding Iran's chemical weapons program. In addition, U.S. officials have made

that the governments accusing Iran of chemical weapons possession would initiate a challenge process against it because such a process would deprive those governments of the opportunity to make "baseless and politically motivated allegations" against the Islamic Republic.

Generally, the Islamic Republic was of the view that the chemical treaty's challenge mechanism of the CWC should be used with utmost diplomatic care, that is, only when all other means offered by the CWC to alleviate non-compliance concerns had been utilized and only in the context of cases that posed a major threat to the convention's objectives. With this in mind, the Khatami administration responded, in the course of 2001–2002, to U.S. and British requests of clarification on the content of the Islamic Republic's chemical activities. Both governments held the Iranian clarifications insufficient.

Apart from seeking to refute the allegations that it had a chemical weapons program, the Khatami government's chemical arms control diplomacy focused on the issue of chemical arms control in the Middle East, on the application of article XI of the CWC, and on the role and future of the OPCW. As far as chemical arms control in the Middle East was concerned, the Iranians continued to promote the objective of *comprehensive chemical arms control in the region* and to refer to Israel's nuclear weapons as the biggest obstacle to the materialization of the Iranian objective. Sympathizing with the Arab position that made a strong linkage between chemical and nuclear disarmament in the Middle East, the officials of the Islamic Republic accused Western powers and especially the United States of a policy of double standard in the region and called on the major powers to pressure Israel to join the NPT and to stop its WMD programs.

As before, however, the Islamic Republic did not consider the nuclear and chemical issues inseparably interlinked. The Khatami administration maintained that the objective of a WMD-free Middle East could be pursued through the division of the regional WMD problem into smaller separate issues dealt with independently. The Khatami government's suggestion that the major powers should give security guarantees to those Middle Eastern states whose threat perceptions kept them from acceding to the CWC was another manifestation of the Iranian approach calling for partial measures to deal with the region`s WMD.

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fewer allusions to the existence of such a program. The ultimate reasons for the changes in the U.S. estimates are not known. (Binder 2008)

Due to the fact that all GCC states had acceded to the CWC in the time period between February 1995 and November 2000, Iran no longer paid much attention to the issue of chemical arms control in the context of Iranian–GCC relations. Instead, the officials of the Islamic Republic concentrated on promoting confidence-building measures between their country and its Gulf Arab neighbours. The Khatami administration's CBM openings in the Gulf, together with its criticism of Western military presence in the region, were aimed at opening the path for the realization of more ambitious Iranian objectives, such as the creation of a WMDFZ or an indigenous security system in the Persian Gulf.

If the issue of chemical arms control was losing urgency in the Iranian–GCC context, the opposite was the case when it came to Iraq. The diplomatic crisis that erupted between Baghdad and the international community in 1998 over UNSCOM arms inspections in Iraq fuelled concerns in Tehran over Saddam Hussein's WMD aspirations. Resultantly, Iranian representatives, determined to *prevent the resurgence of the Iraqi chemical threat*, used international diplomatic fora to stress the importance of continued implementation of the relevant Iraq-related resolutions of the UN Security Council and the complete elimination of Iraq's WMD capabilities. Worried about the standstill in weapons inspection activities in Iraq, the officials of the Islamic Republic also gave their full support for UNMOVIC, the successor body of UNSCOM created in February 1999, to continue the UN-mandated inspections in Iraq. Finally, the international diplomatic debate on Iraq's WMD intentions sparked renewed Iranian criticism of foreign governments' inaction with regard to Iraq's employment of chemical armaments during the Iran–Iraq conflict. The Islamic Republic's historical grievances over Iraq's chemical warfare notwithstanding, the criticism levelled by the Iranians was a diplomatic means to keep Iraq's WMD ambitions in the diplomatic limelight and under international control.

Following the Iranian ratification of the CWC in July 1997, Iran's discontent with international implementation of article XI of the treaty became the dominant hallmark of its chemical arms control operations. The Islamic Republic, often together with other developing countries, continued to express its strong disapproval of the AG export restrictions and aimed for the *removal of extra-CWC export controls*. According to Iranian officials – whose actions in this context were driven by economic, ideological, and possibly also by military considerations – the provisions of article XI were as

important as those of article I of the CWC prohibiting the states parties from developing, producing, possessing, using, or transferring chemical armaments.

Iranian representatives maintained that the CWC provided the states parties with the necessary – and the only legitimate – means to address non-compliance concerns and claimed that the narrow implementation of article XI increased the risk that some member states would start to overlook their treaty obligations and that non-members would decide to permanently reject the convention. Seeking to further strengthen their diplomatic hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed specifically to their own country and warned that the problems with the execution of article XI bolstered the position of those members of the Iranian political elite who wanted to see their country withdraw from the CWC.

Iran's efforts to break the impass in the diplomatic debate on article XI included the May 2001 initiative in which the Iranians called for the creation of an international cooperation committee that would represent the interests of all CWC member states and facilitate the implementation of article XI. The fact that the Iranian initiative was rejected by the members of the AG did not discourage the Iranians from further steps in the issue export controls, for the Khatami administration subsequently signalled that the Islamic Republic would be ready to accept the existence of the group and its export restrictions if they were exclusively targeted at CWC non-members.

Following Iran's ratification of the CWC and the entry into force of the treaty in 1997, the officials of the Islamic Republic, concerned over their country's future influence in international deliberations on chemical arms control, also sought to *prevent the weakening of the role of the OPCW as the central actor in international chemical arms control diplomacy*. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic, a member of the OPCW's Executive Council since May 1998, accused the United States of using financial and diplomatic means to control the organization and strongly objected to the OPCW diplomacy of the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush. Iran's opposition to U.S. policies manifested itself, among others, in the so-called Bustani affair, the diplomatic chain of events initiated by the Bush government which led to the dismissal of José Maurício Bustani, the first director-general of the OPCW, in April 2002.

In the view of Iranian representatives, who lent their support to Bustani in the process, the United States' diplomatic campaign against the OPCW's director-general testified to a hostile American attitude towards international arms control as well as to a dangerous U.S. policy of unilateralism. In essence, the officials of the Islamic Republic

argued, the United States' diplomatic campaign violated the CWC, which stressed the independent nature of the OPCW director-general's position, and the international character of his responsibilities. Moreover, the Iranians – whose practical contribution to the OPCW's work mostly revolved around issues dealing with assistance and protection against chemical weapons – added that by sidelining the relevant organs of the OPCW in the Bustani affair, the United States had breached the rule of law and violated the diplomatic principles of transparency and equality between the CWC states parties.

6.3 Biological Arms Control: Objectives, Actions, and Means

6.3.1 From the revolution to the cease-fire

Prior to the onset of the Iran–Iraq war in September 1980, the objective of the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations was to *maintain continuity in Iranian diplomacy in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution*. As the post-revolutionary Iranian government did not decide to withdraw Iran's membership in the BTWC, which had been ratified by the Majlis in August 1973, the officials of the Islamic Republic – many of whom were remnants from the Shah's administration and whose main consideration, in terms of policy, was to manage the transition from one Iranian regime to another and thereby sustain Iran's position and influence in a specific area of arms control diplomacy – founded their biological arms control operations on the guidelines set during the Shah era and took part in the BTWC's first review conference in March 1980.

At the conference, Iran supported the diplomatic efforts, led by Sweden, to create a permanent BTWC consultative committee to carry out fact-finding missions whenever a suspicion of a treaty violation would arise. The purpose of the committee initiative was to undermine the power bestowed on the permanent members of the UN Security Council by the BTWC to determine whether a non-compliance concern would be addressed or not. Apart from supporting the ultimately unsuccessful Swedish proposal, Iran called on the treaty members to implement the provisions of the preamble and article IX of the BTWC which obliged them to negotiate in good faith to complete a chemical weapons convention. Finally, the Iranians, who called for measures that would contribute to the universality of the BTWC, were of the opinion that the members of the

treaty should hold review conferences at regular intervals or as required in order to review the functioning of the convention and to keep it up to date with changing conditions.

Following Iraq's invasion of Iran and the start of Iraq's chemical warfare, the nature of the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations changed. The reactive post-revolutionary diplomacy found a new purpose and focused on *supporting Iran's efforts to stop Iraq's use of chemical weapons*. On the one hand, Iranian officials, guided by Iran's immediate security needs, used Iraq's employment of chemical weapons as an argumentative launching pad for the extended claim – retracted after the war by the authorities of the Islamic Republic – that Iraq employed biological warfare agents in the war as well. On the other hand, the Iranians used the BTWC and the multilateral diplomatic debates on the treaty to draw international attention to Iraq's chemical warfare.

Thus, for example, the Islamic Republic's argumentation at the second review conference of the BTWC in September 1986 almost totally concentrated on Iraq's use of chemical weapons. Iranian representatives stressed that Iraq's chemical warfare violated the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the BTWC – which, in its preamble and article VIII, emphasizes the significance of the principles and objectives of the protocol and calls on all states to comply with them – and called for the creation of an international mechanism that would ensure that states respect their obligations under the Geneva Protocol. Noting that the international community's indifference towards Iraq's chemical crimes only encouraged the Iraqis to continue their WMD use, the officials of the Islamic Republic called on governments to pressure Iraq to stop its chemical attacks and to ban the export of chemical materials and technology to that country. Moreover, the Iranians insisted that the conference participants should declare the use of chemical armaments a war crime.

Although the review conference ultimately refrained from taking the Iraq-related measures called for by the officials of the Islamic Republic, the Iranians continued, during the rest of the war period, to use international meetings dealing with biological arms control as a venue to discuss Iraq's continuing chemical warfare. Above all, the Iranians, who called on all states to join the BTWC without delay, warned that international inaction vis-à-vis Iraq's chemical attacks could irreparably undermine the credibility of the Geneva Protocol and increase the risk that states would start to use biological warfare agents as well.

6.3.2 From the cease-fire to the Ad Hoc Group negotiations

The Iran–Iraq war continued to have a major influence on the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations even after the hostilities between the two countries had ended in the summer of 1988. The war experience, together with Iran's post-war concern that Iraq had developed and stockpiled significant amounts of chemical and biological armaments, prompted the Islamic Republic to devote more attention to the issue of biological weapons. However, the focus of Iran's biological arms control operations changed after Iraq's defeat in the January–February 1991 war with the U.S.-led coalition forces. The disappearance of the immediate Iraqi threat and the post-Gulf conflict weapons inspections of UNSCOM – which confirmed that Iraq had been capable of researching, producing, testing, and storing biological warfare agents – enabled Iran to adopt an active general diplomatic course in the area of biological arms control and to support the efforts by the international community to improve the BTWC. As a result, Iran's participation in the debate on the strengthening of the treaty came to dominate the content of the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies.

Iran formulated and presented the central elements of its invigorated approach to biological arms control in the course of the time period between the September 1991 review conference of the BTWC and the establishment, in September 1994, of the BTWC Ad Hoc Group which was mandated by the states parties to "consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument."[21] While the Iranian government recognized the security benefits of a BTWC verification system and basically backed the multilateral diplomatic efforts to create such an instrument, it specifically tried to *achieve a cost-effective verification mechanism that could not be used as a tool to uncover Iranian military secrets or to hamper Iran's peaceful biological activities.*

Accordingly, Iranian officials regularly pointed out that the BTWC's verification system should not undermine the states parties' national security. Fearing that verification activities could be used as a cover for espionage, the Iranians called for the

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[21] During this time period, Iran's biological arms control operations included active participation in the work of the 1991 BTWC review conference, in the 1992–1993 VEREX process, as well as in the work of the BTWC special conference of September 1994.

creation of a non-intrusive inspection system – relying on non-intrusive verification methods – that would concentrate on verifying compliance rather than on looking for treaty violators. With security considerations in mind, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also alluded to the importance of the verification activities' objectivity and maintained that international responses to individual violations of the BTWC should vary according to the severity of the violations in question.

Welfare considerations constituted the second main factor that guided Iran's argumentation on BTWC verification. For one thing, Iranian officials stressed that the verification arrangement should not interfere with the states parties' legitimate biological activities and jeopardize their commercial secrets. For another thing, the Iranians were worried about the direct financial costs resulting from the running of the verification system and also feared that in order to compensate for the costs stemming from BTWC verification, developed countries' biological industries might increase the prices of their exports to the developing world. As a consequence, the Islamic Republic called for the creation of a cost-effective verification mechanism for the BTWC and argued that there was no need for the creation of an international verification agency for the treaty. The Iranians noted that the verification responsibilities under the BTWC could be assumed by an already existing international body, such as the World Health Organization.

The Islamic Republic's attempts to *improve international implementation of article X of the BTWC* constituted an another central objective in Iran's biological arms control operations. The Islamic Republic used international arms control fora to point out – both independently and together with other developing countries – that the diplomatic efforts to create a verification system for the BTWC should go hand in hand with full and comprehensive implementation of article X of the convention. The officials of the Islamic Republic – trying to defend their country's economic interests, maintain their ideological credentials, and possibly also to get an access to imports and expertise needed for an Iranian biological weapons program – strongly objected to the application of exports controls – and particularly of those of the AG which included biological agents and manufacturing equipment in its control list in June 1993 – against the states parties and said that the only export controls their country would accept would be the ones jointly agreed upon by the states parties and exclusively targeted against non-members of the BTWC. Moreover, the Iranians warned that unlike in earlier international arms control treaty negotiations, such as those of the CWC, developing

countries would no longer support developed states' verification plans unless they were assured that the creation of the BTWC verification system would result in the elimination of all restrictions on the transfers, for peaceful purposes, of biological materials, equipment, and scientific and technological information.

While calling for the abolition of extra-BTWC export controls, the Islamic Republic also called on developed countries to facilitate and accelerate biological transfers to the Third World. Iranian representatives pointed out that the medical, agricultural, and environmental problems suffered by developing countries not only seriously undermined Third World countries' economic development and their domestic stability, but posed an indirect threat to the developed world's security as well. According to the Iranians, the access to biological transfers was a central incentive for Third World countries to accede to the BTWC and to comply with their obligations under the treaty.

Other BTWC-related issues regularly raised by the officials of the Islamic Republic prior to the beginning of the AHG negotiations included the fact that the convention did not contain an explicit prohibition on the use of biological weapons. Iran maintained that the lack of such a prohibition, together with the retaliation reservations made to the 1925 Geneva Protocol by parties to that document, created a dangerous legal loophole that could be exploited by governments to support the claim that biological warfare was not illegal under international law. In their security-motivated effort to *correct the legal ambiguity surrounding the issue of biological weapons use*, and speaking of the existence of a "serious potential danger to international peace and security," Iranian representatives asked BTWC states parties to find a way to fix the problem. In addition, the Iranians called on all non-members of the Geneva Protocol to immediately join that instrument without reservations and on all countries that still retained protocol reservations which did not exclude the possiblity of in-kind retaliation to cancel such reservations.

Security concerns also explained the Islamic Republic's efforts to *improve the assistance clauses of the BTWC*. Iran's representatives expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that article VII of the BTWC did not lay out concrete mechanisms for the provision of international assistance to victims of biological warfare. The Iranians proposed that the UN and its specialized agencies could assume the responsibility to devise such mechanisms and also put forward the idea of the creation of an international fund for the financing of article VII-related activities. Moreover, Iran was of the opinion that the UN should develop a capability to automatically dispatch – that is, without the

express authorization of the UN Security Council, as prescribed in article VII of the BTWC – a fact-finding team to investigate suspected cases of biological weapons use. Finally, the Iranians called on BTWC member states to create an assistance mechanism that would be activated whenever a member state would become a victim of biological warfare.

As far as the BTWC confidence-building mechanism – launched at the second BTWC review conference and extended at the third review conference – was concerned, the Iranians, cautiously supporting mechanism, tried to use it to *obtain information about other states' biological capabilities*. Thus, recognizing that transparency – in the form of exchange of scientific and medical data and information about past military-related biological activities – between the member states would strengthen the BTWC and furnish Iran with a new source of information – and consequently advance Iran's security interests – the representatives of the Islamic Republic called on governments not only to partake in BTWC-related data exchange, but also to formulate detailed legal definitions for the terms "microbial or other biological agents," "toxins," and "peaceful purposes" mentioned in article I of the BTWC.

According to the Iranians, the terms needed to be precisely defined so that the BTWC states parties' responsibilities under the treaty could be widened to include the obligation to declare what biological and toxin agents they possessed in their territory or under their control or jurisdiction and to disclose the total quantities of the agents in national possession and the purposes the agents were serving. At the same time, however, the Iranians themselves – perhaps because of their attempt, driven primarily by the concern over Iraq's WMD capabilities, to maintain ambiguity about the nature of the Islamic Republic's own biological activities – had not theretofore taken part in the BTWC's transparency measures.

The view that the Middle East should be free from biological armaments and other WMD formed the starting point for the Islamic Republic's argumentation on regional biological arms control. With the security objective of *comprehensive biological arms control in the Middle East* in mind, Iranian officials asserted that Israel's refusal to give up its nuclear weapons by joining the NPT, together with its reluctance to accede to the BTWC, was a source of tension in the region and a factor that prevented the major Arab states from becoming parties to the biological treaty.

The Iranians also maintained that Israel's accession to the NPT and the BTWC would increase the popularity of the notion of a BTWC verification system among the Arab

states which had already joined the BTWC but adopted a skeptical attitude towards the planned verification mechanism. More fundamentally, Iranian representatives argued that Israel's participation in the NPT and BTWC would contribute to diplomatic efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict and to establish a WMDFZ in the Middle East. Still, in the end, the Islamic Republic, unlike certain Arab states, did not link its BTWC-related behaviour to Israel's arms control policies.

In the Iranian analysis, extra-regional governments' diplomatic support for Israel was a central reason for Israel's unwillingness to listen to the other regional countries' arms control concerns. The representatives of the Islamic Republic claimed that extra-regional states' diplomatic double standard in the Middle East was evident also in the manner in which they refrained from criticizing Israel's WMD programs and, instead, called on Arab governments to participate in international arms control instruments and baselessly accused certain regional countries of pursuing biological weapons programs. The fact that Iran was one of the states suspected of biological weapons activities forced the officials of the Islamic Republic, who denounced biological weapons as immoral, to actively seek to *convince the international community that the Islamic Republic did not possess biological weapons*. As it will be discussed below, it is not clear whether Iran's arms control operations in this respect stemmed from a concern over the security and economic costs of such suspicions or from a deliberate diplomatic attempt to *cover an actual weapons program* – or from both.

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic efforts to *promote biological arms control cooperation in the Persian Gulf sub-region*, which was seen by the Iranians as a way to strengthen their country's security and influence in the Gulf, centered around Iranian proposals, made since 1991, for joint measures in the area of BTWC verification. In 1994, after having introduced the notion of a defensive security scheme, Iranian officials started to refer to the "formulation of complementary regional verification mechanisms" as an integral component of the security scheme initiative and as a regional contribution to the broader international debate on the BTWC's verification system.

6.3.3 The Ad Hoc Group years

Between 1995–2001, the time period during which international diplomatic efforts in the area of biological arms control centered around the AHG negotiations, the content of

Iran's biological arms control argumentation remained essentially unchanged. In the AHG talks, the representatives of the Islamic Republic tried, above all, to *ensure that the diplomatic process of improving the BTWC would lead to full international implementation of the treaty's article X.*[22] The Iranians, driven by welfare-related considerations, continued to stress the importance of article X-related issues to their country and to developing countries in general and warned that insensitivity to Third World states' negotiation objectives in the AHG could prompt those countries either to block the creation of the BTWC verification mechanism or to stay out of the planned legally binding instrument to strengthen the treaty.

Together with a number of other NAM states – such as China, India, Pakistan, and Brazil – Iran emphasized that the efforts to improve the BTWC and to create a verification mechanism for the treaty would have to include a promise to the Third World states parties of full access to biological imports. The officials of the Islamic Republic urged developed countries to ensure the BTWC's "effective and full implementation" and to conclude bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation agreements with developing countries in the area of disease prevention. In addition, Iran's AHG negotiators called on advanced industrialized nations to help developing countries to establish research institutes so that Third World states would have the necessary infrastructural means to make advances in the application of biology and biotechnology. In the Iranian view, such measures would not only legitimately reward those states that respected the BTWC and intended to adhere to the legally binding BTWC protocol, but they would also enable developed countries to monitor that developing countries' biological activities stay within the boundaries of international law.

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[22] Article-X related issues were at the core of Iran's diplomatic argumentation also at the Fourth Review Conference of the BTWC in November–December 1996. As for other issues discussed by Iranian representatives at the 1996 BTWC conference, the Iranians, motivated by security considerations, continued their efforts to *improve the assistance clauses of the biological treaty*. Moreover, the officials of the Islamic Republic, defending their country's security interests and diplomatic influence, sought to *promote multilateralism in the application of the problem-solving and compliance procedures of the BTWC*. Accordingly, on the one hand, the Iranians argued that article V of the treaty provided an appropriate framework for resolving any problems which may arise between the states parties "in relation to the objective, or in the application, of the provisions of the Convention." On the other hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed that the states parties should refrain from taking unilateral action in resolving any concerns with regard to the implementation of the BTWC and noted, in respect to article VI of the biological treaty, that although the complaint mechanism of the BTWC revolved around the UN Security Council, all member states ought to have the opportunity to participate in the discussions and decision-making on cases of treaty non-compliance and other violations of the BTWC.

As before, the representatives of the Islamic Republic strongly criticized extra-BTWC export controls and especially those of the AG. Noting that extra-BTWC export restrictions hampered economic and social development in Iran and other developing countries, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that the AG should be resolved immediately after the BTWC protocol's entry into force and after the international agency charged with the responsibility to implement that instrument would be in place.

As a replacement to the AG, Iran envisioned the establishment of a BTWC-based arrangement where the states parties would agree on "multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory, and legally binding" transfer guidelines and explicitly include them in the treaty protocol. The Iranians added that an agreement on transfer guidelines should create a legal obligation for the states parties to harmonize their national export control policies and to render their export regulations consistent with the objectives of the BTWC. More concretely, the representatives of the Islamic Republic spoke of a system that would rely on end-user certificates and replace existing extra-BTWC transfer regulations upon the treaty protocol's entry into force.

In the Iranian-supported system, the recipients of biological transfers would assure that the items procured by them would be used only for peaceful purposes and not be re-transferred to a third country without the authorization of the original supplier. The end-user certificates would also contain the names and the addresses of the end-users as well as information about the types and quantities of the received items and about the purposes for which the items were procured in the first place. As far as biological transfers between the members and the non-members of the BTWC were concerned, the Islamic Republic called for the formulation of a separate set of guidelines to regulate such interactions.

Like many other NAM countries, Iran pointed out in the AHG negotiations that a BTWC-based export regulation arrangement should include a mechanism to settle transfer-related disputes among the states parties. In essence, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that if a state party was denied a biological transfer for a reason which it found to be inconsistent with the provisions of the BTWC and with the planned treaty protocol's article VII, the country in question would have the right to seek the annulment of the denial through certain procedures. Bilateral consultations between the party that had made the transfer request and the party that had refused to carry out the transfer were referred to by the Iranians as the principal dispute-settling mechanism. Yet, the officials of the Islamic Republic also envisioned a situation where such

consultations would end in an impasse. The Iranians argued that in such a case, the complainant would have the right to rely on a set of institutional steps which, if not bringing about a change in the other party's stance, would ultimately lead to the imposition of punitive measures on that country.

The Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators, supported by their NAM colleagues, were also of the opinion that the BTWC protocol ought to contain a mechanism under which the states parties would be obliged to submit annual reports on the measures taken by them to implement the provisions of article X of the BTWC. In the Iranian model, the reports submitted by the member states would be examined in accordance to a certain procedure, after which recommendations pertaining to the execution of article X would be made to the states parties. Under the Iranian-promoted reporting mechanism, the states parties would also have the right to submit declarations on any restrictions on the transfers of biological materials, equipment, and technology identified by them.

Furthermore, and again together with other NAM delegations, the Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators called for the creation of a cooperation committee that would act as one of the BTWC protocol's subsidiary organs and carry the responsibility for ensuring that the states parties fully implement the provisions of article X of the BTWC and article VII of the treaty protocol. In the NAM plan of January 1999, co-sponsored by the Islamic Republic, the NAM negotiators argued that the concrete tasks of the proposed committee would include the review of the functioning of the voluntary fund that would be created to finance technological and scientific cooperation between the states parties. The committee would also be charged with the responsibility to facilitate cooperation between the states parties in exchange of biological materials, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes as well as to promote the publication and distribution of relevant research data among the member states. In the NAM initiative, the cooperation committee would submit an annual report of its activities to the Conference of the States Parties, the main decision-making organ of the planned international body responsible for the BTWC protocol's execution. The report would contain the committee's proposals and recommendations on how to improve the execution of article X of the BTWC.

During the AHG negotiations, Iran, seeking to promote its security and welfare interests, also continued to pursue its diplomatic objective of *achieving a cost-effective verification mechanism that could not be used as a tool to uncover Iranian military secrets or to hamper Iran's peaceful biological activities*. While emphasizing the

importance of the planned verification mechanism and lending its full support to the AHG's work in the matter, however, Iranian representatives had a clear conception of what the future system should look like. The Iranians insisted that all the states parties would have to be equally and objectively treated in connection with verification and that they should all be granted the opportunity to take part in verification-related decision-making. In a similar fashion, the Islamic Republic called for a verification system that would rely on strict and carefully detailed procedures that would be uniformly applied to all cases. Finally, Iranian officials – who stressed that the BTWC and the planned treaty protocol constituted a sufficient and the only legitimate international framework for addressing BTWC-related compliance issues – pointed out that the steps taken under the verification mechanism should respect the states parties' commercial proprietary information and, first and foremost, their national security interests.

The central role played by security considerations in the Islamic Republic's argumentation on BTWC verification manifested itself in a number of ways. First of all, Iranian officials, together with their NAM colleagues, drew a conceptual distinction between natural and unusual outbreaks of disease and, fearing that international investigations of natural disease outbreaks could be used as a shield for espionage, maintained that the investigation and control of the former were the exclusive responsibility of national governments.

Secondly, although recognizing that unusual disease outbreaks could be illustrative of biological weapons use and that each state party to the BTWC protocol should have the right to request the investigation of such incidents, the Islamic Republic's AHG negotiators argued, jointly with their NAM counterparts, that an investigation request made by a member state should explicitly articulate why the party in question believed that an unusual disease outbreak had occurred and that the requesting state should substantiate its claim by providing detailed evidence and other necessary information to the Executive Council of the planned BTWC organization.

Thirdly, security considerations explained the Iranian view that national declarations submitted to the BTWC organization should form the backbone of the agency's verification activities. In other words, the Iranians were of the opinion that BTWC inspectors' work should focus on verifying the accuracy of the information provided by individual governments and that the inspectors would be allowed to resort to more intrusive verification measures only when non-compliance concerns could not be alleviated through other means.

In the AHG, as well as at the fourth BTWC review conference, Iran also continued to pursue the objective of *correcting the legal ambiguity surrounding the issue of biological weapons use*. At the 1996 review conference, the Islamic Republic tabled a proposal – supported by a number of other NAM states, such as India, Pakistan, and Mexico – in which it called for the insertion of the word 'use' in the title and article I of the BTWC. According to the Iranians – who expressed their particular concern over the possibility that states with retaliation reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol could maintain that, as far as they were concerned, only the first use of biological weapons was prohibited under international law – the treaty amendments could be adopted at a BTWC special conference.

In the end, however, most delegations at the review conference argued that a reaffirmation in the conference's final declaration that the BTWC forbids the use of biological armaments would be an adequate step in the matter for the time being. The stand taken by the majority of the BTWC states parties effectively foiled further Iranian diplomatic efforts in the definitional issue concerning biological weapons use. Still, Iran raised the question again in the AHG talks and called for the inclusion of a text provision explicitly banning biological weapons use in the BTWC protocol. In spite of the diplomatic support Iran received from other NAM countries in the matter, however, most AHG delegations saw no need for the Iranian-promoted text amendment.

Between the time period of 1995–2001, the officials of the Islamic Republic also kept referring to *comprehensive biological arms control in the Middle East* as the main objective of their biological diplomacy in the regional context. Calling for the creation of a WMDFZ in the Middle East, Iranian representatives viewed biological arms control as part of that wider effort and called on all the regional governments to accede to the BTWC and to the planned treaty protocol. Once again, the Iranians named Israel as the biggest obstacle to biological arms control and, more broadly, to the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East. According to the Islamic Republic, Israel's policies of "aggression, occupation, and expansionism," together with its nuclear weapons and its reluctance to join international arms control instruments, were the main cause for arms proliferation in the Middle East and for the lack of progress in WMD arms control in the region.

In addition to blaming Israel for the poor security situation of the Middle East, Iranian authorities declared extra-regional powers' – and especially the United States' – support for Israel's policies as a factor that worsened the circumstances in the region.

As a consequence, the Iranians called on those powers to end their support for Israel's WMD policies and to adopt a non-selective and non-discriminatory diplomatic course in the Middle East.

Another Middle Eastern government that was singled out in Iran's argumentation on regional biological arms control was Iraq. Trying to use diplomatic means to *keep Iraq's biological weapons ambitions in check*, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained that due to its possession of WMD, Iraq, together with Israel, had to be among the Middle Eastern countries joining the planned BTWC protocol upon that instrument's entry into force. The Iranians argued that while they did not have detailed information about Iraq's activities in the area of biological weapons, Iraq most definitely continued to pose a WMD threat to their country. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic stressed that any setback in the efforts of the UN to eliminate Iraq's WMD capabilities amounted to an alarming development and necessitated a resolute response from the international community.

As far as the Persian Gulf sub-region was concerned, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to seek to *promote biological arms control-related cooperation between Iran and its GCC neighbours*. Stressing their readiness to engage in a serious diplomatic dialogue with their Gulf Arab neighbours and maintaining that there were immediate possibilities for Iranian–GCC cooperation in the area of arms control, the authorities of the Islamic Republic reintroduced the idea of joint regional verification measures to complement those planned for the BTWC. In this connection, the Iranians also pointed out that their country wanted to work for the creation of a WMDFZ in the Gulf and did not harbour any aggressive intentions in the region.

The objective of *convincing foreign governments that the Islamic Republic did not possess biological weapons* was part of Iran's biological arms control operations not only in the Persian Gulf but in the wider international diplomatic context as well. Hoping to reduce the economic and political costs resulting to their country from such allegations, Iranian representatives dismissed all suggestions that their government was pursuing a biological weapons program and declared such claims to be indicative of a political campaign against the Islamic Republic. The Iranians stressed that, based on Islamic principles, their country considered biological armaments and all other types of WMD inhumane and illegitimate.

Apart from alluding to the immorality of biological armaments as a proof of Iran's disinterest in biological weapons, the officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that

their country had always strictly complied with its obligations under the BTWC, actively taken part in multilateral diplomatic discussions on biological arms control, supported the establishment of a verification system for the BTWC, and tried to promote biological arms control in the regional Middle Eastern context. Yet, at the same time, the Iranians stressed that their country had every right to utilize the advances made in biology and biotechnology for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the Iranian people.

On the basis of the fact that there exists very little public information about Iranian activities in the area of biological weapons, the question of whether the Islamic Republic used its biological diplomacy as a shield to *cover a weapons program* remains a matter of speculation.[23] The governments and observers accusing Iran of biological weapons development maintain that the Islamic Republic launched a weapons program under the control of the IRGC in the course of the Iran–Iraq war in the early 1980s. According to the U.S. government, the main source of information relied on by Iran observers, by the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, Iran had managed to establish a growing biotechnology industry, to gain significant pharmaceutical experience, and to create the overall infrastructure to support its biological weapons program. The Americans also believe that the Islamic Republic had used Iranian university-affiliated research institutes and state-owned scientific establishments as procurement fronts for its weapons program and that the Islamic Republic had integrated its military effort into Iran's civilian pharmaceutical industry.[24] (Eisenstadt 1998: 2–3 and Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 2006: 49–51)

Furthermore, U.S. government sources note that in the early 2000s, Iran's biological weapons program was for the most part still in a research and development phase, but that the Iranians had possibly already managed to produce small quantities of biological warfare agents.[25] The agents most often linked to the Iranian weapons program, as

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[23] As pointed out by Cordesman and Al-Rodhan (2006: 49), "any analysis of Iran's biological weapons effort must be even more speculative than analysis of its chemical weapons standing." Of course, there are factors other than Iran's weapons-related activities that can be used for analyzing that country's military intentions. Note here, for example, the observation made by Jones (1998: 48) that some officials of the Islamic Republic strongly believe that the security benefits of the BTWC to Iran are as insignificant as those of the 1925 Geneva Protocol during the Iran–Iraq war.

[24] According to Iranian opposition groups, the Islamic Republic's research activities on biological weapons have mainly taken place at the Karaj-based Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute whose representatives, as noted above in chapter 4, have been closely involved in the formulation and execution of the Islamic Republic's biological arms control diplomacy (*Jane's Sentinel 1999*: 95).

[25] Some U.S. intelligence sources suggest that the Islamic Republic had perhaps also succeeded in actually weaponizing and producing a small number of biological weapons (Eisenstadt 1998: 2 and Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 2006: 51–53).

referred to in the research literature, consist of anthrax, botulinum toxin, and mycotoxins. The Islamic Republic's potential delivery systems for biological armaments include artillery shells, rockets, various kinds of missiles, helicopters, and fighter aircraft. As far as the sources of the Islamic Republic's biological imports and expertise are concerned, the Russians have acted as Iran's key partner in the development of the Islamic Republic's biological infrastructure. Additionally, the Islamic Republic's biological activities have reportedly included cooperation with European, Chinese, Indian, and possibly also with North Korean firms and entities.[26] (Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 2006: 49–54, 56 and Eisenstadt 1998: 2–3 and Carus 2000: 6–7)

6.3.4 Iran and the demise of the Ad Hoc Group

The election of George W. Bush as the president of the United States in 2000 came to have a major influence on the content of Islamic Iran's biological arms control operations. On the one hand, the Bush administration's announcement, made on 25 July 2001 at the 24th session of the AHG, that the United States would withdraw its support for the planned BTWC protocol – a diplomatic move that effectively stopped the protocol talks – prompted Iranian authorities to forcefully pursue the objective of *saving the AHG process*. On the other hand, the fact that the Bush administration explicitly accused the Islamic Republic of operating a clandestine biological weapons program resulted in an Iranian diplomatic effort to *refute the U.S. accusations and to discredit the policies of the Bush government*.

As far as the objective of saving the AHG process was concerned, Iran strongly condemned the U.S. rejection of the BTWC protocol and maintained that the Americans had tried to obstruct the protocol talks throughout the negotiations. According to the Islamic Republic – which feared that the Bush administration's diplomacy would jeopardize Iran's biological arms control objectives – the decision taken by the United States not only seriously damaged international disarmament efforts but also undermined the role of arms control as a means to improve regional security. Pointing

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[26] Iranian officials openly recognize their country's cooperation with foreign entities and experts in the biological field – for example, with Russians experts and Western companies – but emphasize that such cooperation has been exclusively for peaceful purposes (author's interview with A. A. Soltanieh, Geneva, 22 July 2002). Of course, the problem with the Iranian claims is that the very same biological materials,

to the Middle Eastern arena, Iranian officials claimed that the U.S. rejection of the BTWC protocol enabled Israel and Iraq to continue their biological weapons programs without any serious international restrictions and made the establishment of a Middle Eastern WMDFZ a more distant scenario. Disheartened by the sudden turn in the protocol talks, the Iranians also called, ultimately unsuccessfully, on the AHG to expressly state, in the final document of the group's 24th session, that the United States had "killed" the BTWC protocol or to at least include the United States' rejection announcement of July 2001 in the final document as an appendix.

Following the Bush administration's rejection of the protocol negotiations, which had led to the adjournment of the AHG's 24th session without the adoption of a final document, the Islamic Republic, with the support of other NAM countries, began to point out that the mandate of the AHG was still valid and that the protocol negotiations should be restarted without the Americans. At the fifth review conference of the BTWC in November–December 2001, Iranian delegates argued that the negotiations should continue after the conference and that the protocol could be finalized within a time period of one year.[27] In the Iranian opinion, the text of the final protocol should be adopted by a special BTWC conference prior to the treaty's sixth review conference taking place in 2006.

Strongly objecting to the idea that the AHG negotiations would be abandoned or substituted by an alternative diplomatic process, the delegates of the Islamic Republic, who made it clear that their support for the review conference's final declaration would be dependent on the steps taken by the states parties with regard to the future of the AHG, categorically rejected the call made by the U.S. delegation at the final hours of the fifth review conference for an explicit termination of the AHG's mandate and for a diplomatic process that would replace the AHG talks. The Iranians were not alone in objecting to the U.S. initiative, for other conference delegations, too, rejected the American proposal. As a result of the diplomatic deadlock that ensued, the review conference failed to complete its work and agreed to convene in a resumed session in November 2002.

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equipment, and know-how that are fundamental to legitimate industries and research laboratories can be utilized for military purposes, too.

[27] It should be reminded here that, at the November–December 2001 session of the fifth review conference of the BTWC, the Islamic Republic also focused on calling for measures that would promote the universality of the biological treaty, on discussing the fact that the BTWC did not expressly ban the use of biological weapons, and on advocating its views on article X of the convention.

In spite of its vehement diplomatic defence of the AHG process as the only effective avenue to strengthen the BTWC and to tackle the future challenges posed by biological armaments, however, by the time of the fifth BTWC review conference's resumed session, Iran had recognized that the restart of the AHG negotiations would not materialize in the near future. Consequently, the Islamic Republic reluctantly agreed to the diplomatic formula put forward by the chairman of the fifth review conference in which the states parties would seek to improve the BTWC through annual one-week meetings. Each of the annual gatherings, as referred to in the follow-up mechanism presented by the chairman which also included the idea of preparatory expert meetings preceding the states parties' annual meetings, would focus on a specific subject with the aim of executing and strengthening the biological treaty.

Following the acceptance of the chairman's proposal on 14 November 2002, Iran and its NAM allies expressly criticized the fact that the states parties had failed to strengthen the BTWC through a legally binding instrument. Moreover, they stressed that their acceptance of the follow-up mechanism rested, among others, on the understanding that the states parties of the BTWC could at any time decide on additional treaty-related diplomatic measures, that the sixth review conference would decide on further action in the area of biological disarmament, and that any steps taken to improve the BTWC should take all the aspects of the treaty into consideration.

Their disappointment at the collapse of the AHG process notwithstanding, the Islamic Republic and its NAM allies maintained that, on the positive side, the end result of the fifth BTWC review conference had illustrated that they had managed to prevent any attempt to foreclose the option that the treaty members would take "more meaningful" steps in the area of biological disarmament in the future. Furthermore, Iran and its NAM allies asserted that they had succeeded in "preserving multilateralism as the only vehicle for preventing the reprehensible use of disease as instruments of terror and war in a sustainable way." In other words, the NAM governments believed that they had managed to keep the diplomatic spotlight on the AHG and to make sure that the diplomatic follow-up mechanism, as agreed at the fifth review conference, could not be interpreted as replacing the AHG process. As argued by Iranian officials, the group's 1994 mandate remained intact and there was no time limit to it.

As for the accusations made by the United States that Iran was pursuing biological weapons and thereby violating its obligations under the BTWC, the officials of the Islamic Republic categorically rejected such allegations. The Iranians argued that their

country viewed biological weapons as inhumane, immoral, and illegal, and that, therefore, such armaments had no place in the Islamic Republic's defence doctrine. Moreover, Iranian representatives stressed that their country's membership in multilateral WMD arms control treaties, its full cooperation with international agencies involved in arms control, its active role in the AHG process, and its participation in the confidence-building mechanism of the BTWC[28] testified to Iran's peaceful intentions and to its commitment to biological arms control and international law.

Iranian officials – who threatened, at the fifth review conference of the BTWC, to block the adoption of a final conference document should the United States continue to make false allegations against other states parties – asserted that it was the Americans themselves who were violating the provisions of the biological treaty. First of all, the Iranians maintained that the United States had shipped "deadly biological agents" to Israel as well as to its other allies despite those countries' disregard for international arms control accords. Secondly, by referring to news reports published in September 2001 revealing that the U.S. government had undertaken secret research into biological armaments, the representatives of the Islamic Republic accused the Americans of researching and developing biological weapons. Finally, the Iranians extended their criticism of the United States to a general diplomatic attack against the policies of the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush. According to Iranian officials, the Bush government's NMD program, its diplomatic efforts to have the ABM Treaty revised, together with its non-accession to the CTBT, demonstrated, for their part, that the Americans were obstructing multilateral diplomatic efforts and undermining international peace and security.

Indeed, the emphasis placed by the Bush administration on unilateralism was a key factor behind Iran's diplomatic counterattacks against the Americans. Fearing that the Bush government might take unilateral diplomatic and military action against the Islamic Republic, Iranian authorities vehemently defended the role of multilateralism, arms control, and international law in inter-state relations. Iranian concerns over the United States' intentions vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic became also evident from Iran's argumentation at the fifth BTWC review conference on articles V and VI of the treaty.

On the one hand, the delegates of the Islamic Republic, referring to article V of the BTWC, noted that existing provisions of that article provided an appropriate framework

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[28] The government of president Khatami provided information to the UN concerning the confidence-building measures A, B, and G in 1998, 1999, and again in 2002.

for resolving any problems that might arise between the member states and called on the states parties to "refrain from unilateral and discriminatory action" in resolving any concerns pertaining to the execution of the BTWC. On the other hand, the Iranians alluded to article VI of the treaty, which contains the BTWC's complaint procedure, and pointed out that the states parties should refrain from baseless non-compliance accusations against each other. According to the delegates of the Islamic Republic, any non-compliance complaint should be based on factual evidence confirming the complaint's validity.

Although Iranian officials did not miss an opportunity to also remind the Americans that they had caused the collapse of the AHG talks, by the time of the United States' rejection announcement of July 2001, the Islamic Republic itself had not yet expressed an unreserved support for the so-called composite protocol text which had been presented by the chairman of the AHG in March 2001 to serve as the basis for the final negotiations on the BTWC protocol. After their initial objection to the whole idea of a composite text, Iranian officials had focused their criticism on the fact that the composite text, contrary to the wishes of Iran and its NAM allies, made no references to the abolition of extra-BTWC export controls between the treaty members. Arguing that the composite text did not strike an acceptable balance between the disarmament and development aspects of the planned BTWC protocol, Iranian representatives had even pointed out that their country's participation in the BTWC protocol would depend on the fate of the issue of export controls in the final AHG negotiations.

In addition, the Iranians had expressed their dissatisfaction with the entry into force provisions of the composite text which, the officials Islamic Republic argued, failed to make the EIF of the planned BTWC protocol conditional on the participation in the instrument of all the states with advanced biological and biotechnological sectors. Putting forward their own formula, which made the protocol's EIF dependent on the accession to the instrument of 50 states with advanced biological capabilities and technologies, Iranian representatives had argued that it would be better to have a universal and effective treaty protocol in place than to allow proliferators to opt out of that instrument. Expressly referring to Israel and Iraq, the Iranians had also noted that the participation of the two Middle Eastern countries in the protocol was of utmost importance to the Islamic Republic.

Still, at the end of the day, it seems that Iran would have accepted the composite text even if its negotiation objectives in the final AHG talks would not have materialized.

Iranian representatives themselves subsequently said that this would have been case had the United States not stopped the AHG process. In short, the Islamic Republic's security and welfare stakes in the BTWC protocol were such that probably only extraordinary events would have led the Iranians to object to the creation of a new international legal instrument in the area of biological arms control.

6.4 Nuclear Arms Control: Objectives, Actions, and Means

6.4.1 From the revolution to the cease-fire

One of the first steps taken by the new Iranian government in the area of nuclear diplomacy after the 1979 revolution was to terminate the nuclear deals made by the Shah's government with foreign suppliers, especially with the Americans, the French, and the Germans. And while unilaterally relieving their country from the Shah's nuclear commitments, Iran's officials used international diplomatic fora to level strong criticism at the dethroned Shah's nuclear ambitions. According to the authorities of the Islamic Republic, the Iranian monarch had embarked on an excessive nuclear power program that had not only ignored the real needs of the Iranian people and deepened Iran's already dramatic dependence on foreign powers, but also overlooked the difficulties and dangers pertaining to the execution of a massive program in a country prone to earthquakes and with an insufficient technical infrastructure.

Yet, despite the fact that it was widely believed at the time that the Shah's nuclear efforts had aimed at developing a nuclear weapons capability for Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic refrained from referring to the military dimension of the ousted Iranian monarch's nuclear program. Thus, the Islamic Republic's representatives treated the Shah's program purely as a civilian project and, as a result, as an issue that was outside the purview of arms control. But after the Islamic Republic expressed its interest in nuclear science and research and declared its intention to pursue a peaceful nuclear power program, Iran's nuclear activities soon turned into a question that was heavily present in the Islamic Republic's arms control argumentation.

On the one hand, this was the result of post-revolutionary Iran's image as a destructive force in international politics which led many governments, and especially the United States, to define the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities as militarily motivated. Accordingly, Iranian authorities relied on arms control diplomacy to counter

the accusations that their country was interested in nuclear weapons and to state their commitment to nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, Iranian officials used international arms control fora to strongly defend their country's right, under article IV of the NPT, to pursue nuclear activities for peaceful purposes.

6.4.1.1 The objectives

The starting point for Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations was its stated categorical objection to nuclear weapons. According to Iranian authorities, no country in the world should be allowed to be in possession of weapons capable of jeopardizing the survival of humanity. Calling for universal elimination of nuclear armaments, the officials of the Islamic Republic criticized the poor state of international nuclear arms control and blamed the NPT-defined NWS for the continuance of the nuclear arms race. As a consequence, a major part of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations between the 1979 Iranian revolution and the August 1988 cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war focused on *drawing international attention to the reluctance of NWS to give up their nuclear* weapons.

Iran argued that while, under the NPT, NWS carried the main responsibility for ridding the world from the scourge of nuclear armaments, they showed no real interest in stopping the nuclear arms race, the quantitative and qualitative development of their nuclear arsenals, and the deployment of nuclear armaments to the soil of non-nuclear-weapon states. Pointing out that the NPT was intended for blocking not only the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons but the vertical proliferation of such armaments, too, Iranian officials strongly denounced military policies that based on the strategic concepts of nuclear deterrence, MAD, and limited nuclear war. Also, the representatives of the Islamic Republic expressed their country's objection to individual efforts made by the nuclear powers to improve their military capabilities. Thus, for example, the Iranians denounced the United States' Strategic Defence Initiative – and consequently called for the creation of an international treaty that would ban the use of outer space for all kinds of military purposes – as well as NATO's deployment, from 1983 onwards, of Pershing-II intermediate-range nuclear missiles in West Germany.

Although the officials of the Islamic Republic – who called on the nuclear powers to adopt, as an arms control measure, the principle of no-first-use of nuclear armaments in their military postures – welcomed the Cold War superpowers' bilateral negotiations on

controlling their nuclear arsenals, the Iranians essentially regarded such talks as another way for the United States and the Soviet Union to try to get the upper hand of each other and as a means to score propaganda points before international and domestic audiences. In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic accused the superpowers of viewing their nuclear armaments as an instrument to politically pressure and blackmail developing countries, the "oppressed" of the world. Rejecting the superpowers' nuclear policies as morally appalling and enormously dangerous, Iranian representatives also warned that the superpowers were even prepared to use nuclear weapons against Third World countries if that was necessary for securing their world dominance and "imperialistic" objectives.

However, while arguing that the nuclear policies of the major powers were driving non-nuclear states to seek a nuclear weapons capability of their own in order to defend their security and sovereignty, the officials of the Islamic Republic stressed that it was all nations' moral duty to refrain from the possession of nuclear arms. Aiming to *mobilize non-nuclear states to oppose the nuclear policies of the major powers*, the Iranians, denouncing the view that nuclear weapons acted as a symbol of national prestige, called on Third World states to take the lead in multilateral nuclear arms control diplomacy and equated efforts to rid the world from nuclear weapons with the fight against colonialism. In this connection, the officials of the Islamic Republic put forth the idea of an "international police force" composed of developing countries that would "control the atomic arsenals of the East and the West" under the supervision of the IAEA. More generally, the Iranians called on opponents of nuclear weapons worldwide to strive for a moral transformation in international relations so that the military mind-sets placing importance on nuclear weapons could be undermined.

The Islamic Republic's effort to *promote the establishment of a comprehensive international ban on nuclear weapon testing* was one manifestation of the post-revolutionary Iranian regime's stated objection to nuclear armaments. Adopting the diplomatic position already presented by the Shah's government, the Iranians argued that a CTB would obstruct both the nuclear weapon states' attempts to develop new types of nuclear armaments and the nuclear weapon aspirants' military programs and, consequently, mark an important step towards total nuclear disarmament. To strengthen their case against nuclear testing, the officials of the Islamic Republic further noted that nuclear weapon tests constituted a threat not only to international, regional, and national security, but more straightforwardly to human health and the natural environment as

well. Finally, the Iranians maintained that while occupied with diplomatic talks to create an international nuclear test-ban treaty, states should immediately commit themselves, as an interim measure, to a nuclear test moratorium.

Iran's efforts to *obtain positive and negative security assurances from the nuclear powers* was another diplomatic objective that testified to the Islamic Republic's concern over nuclear armaments. Iranian officials stressed that it was the right of non-nuclear states to receive security assurances from NWS in return for having given up their access to nuclear armaments by joining the NPT as NNWS. According to the Iranians, NNWS urgently needed such assurances – and especially NSA – for the protection of their national security. In addition, Iranian representatives noted that legally binding security assurances would make the NPT more equitable as well as more attractive to treaty non-members. The Islamic Republic expressly emphasized that the security assurances given by NWS would have to be legally binding, contain no interpretative loopholes, and be codified into a legal document, either into the NPT or a separate instrument created for the purpose. In the Iranian view, the security assurances theretofore granted by the nuclear powers had been too weak or limited and, therefore, not meaningfully contributed to the security of NNWS.

The post-revolutionary Iranian regime's diplomacy on regional nuclear arms control mainly centered around the objective of *the creation of NWFZ in various parts of the world and particularly in the Middle East*. The Islamic Republic expressed its support for the existing and for future NWFZ in the world and quickly adopted the Shah government's 1974 initiative for the formation of a Middle Eastern NWFZ as a central element of its nuclear arms control operations. However, the Islamic Republic's NWFZ diplomacy, even when it dealt with the Middle Eastern nuclear-free zone, refrained from detailed discussions about what future NWFZ should look like in practice. The same applied to Iran's war-time call, made in 1986, for a *nuclear-weapon-free Persian Gulf sub-region*, an objective that was closely related to the Islamic Republic's objection to extra-regional military presence in the Gulf and to Iran's idea of an indigenous security system in the region. In addition to advocating the creation of NWFZ, the officials of the Islamic Republic also sought to *advance the establishment of zones of peace in various parts of the world and the Indian Ocean region, in particular*.

The Islamic Republic's argumentation on regional nuclear arms control included specific attacks against Israel and South Africa, two countries with whom the post-revolutionary Iranian regime had cut off all official relations. The authorities of the

Islamic Republic named Israel and South Africa as "racist and aggressive powers" that possessed nuclear weapons, cooperated with each other in the nuclear field, and tried to use their status as nuclear powers for the purpose of "territorial expansion," "hegemony," and political blackmail. Warning that Israel's and South Africa's nuclear weapon programs posed a serious threat to international and regional security and increased the possibility of nuclear arms racing both in Africa and the Middle East, the Islamic Republic used international arms control fora to *draw attention to Israeli and South African nuclear capabilities and to achieve their immediate dismantlement.*

So that the international community could realize this objective, Iranian officials maintained, the major powers should, as a preliminary step, diplomatically release all the data they had on Israel's and South Africa's nuclear weapons programs. Such information, the Iranians stressed, would enable multilateral diplomatic talks on those programs to be conducted based on comprehensive information. Also, the Islamic Republic called on governments to stop all nuclear cooperation with the two countries unless they agreed to join the NPT and accept full-scope IAEA safeguards. Finally, in a more dramatic manner, Iranian officials questioned the legitimacy Israel's and South Africa's existence as states and called for the expulsion of the two countries from international organizations. The Iranians even went so far as to couple their acceptance of the IAEA's safeguards budget with the placing of Israeli and South African nuclear activities under the agency's full-scope safeguards. The fact that, ultimately, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic actions against Israel and South Africa remained unsuccessful led Iranian officials to vent their frustration at Western governments and especially at the United States which, the Iranians claimed, acted as the guardian of Israel and South Africa and of those regimes' military programs.

As far as the Iran–Iraq war of 1980–88 was concerned, the only nuclear arms control topic directly related to the conflict concerned the war-time military strikes carried out against nuclear facilities in both Iran and Iraq. Not surprisingly, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic remained silent about the fact that, on 30 September 1980, only about a week after the start of the war, their country conducted an air raid against Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor located near Baghdad. However, when the Israeli air force carried out a bombing mission at the same nuclear site in June 1981 and fully destroyed the Iraqi reactor, Iranian authorities used international arms control arenas to initiate a vehement diplomatic campaign against Israel.

By seeking to *rally the international community to strongly condemn the Israeli operation and to impose international sanctions on that country*, the Iranians portrayed themselves, above all, as defenders of the Muslim world and defined the Israeli attack as a crime against the Islamic community as a whole. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, who pointed out that their activities in the matter were about fulfilling a religious duty, Israel had violated Iraq's "Islamic airspace," damaged the property of all Muslims, and committed an offense against all Islamic nations. The Islamic Republic stressed that the fact that the target of Israel's attack had been a country which had invaded Iran and committed various kinds of crimes in the Iran–Iraq war did not influence its approach to the Osirak case which based on Islamic ideology and the principle of justice. Ideological considerations aside, the Iranians emphasized that the Israeli operation had also constituted a blatant breach against the basic norms of international law and that Israel's operation against Osirak could not be legitimized under any circumstances.

The Islamic Republic argued that, in the light of the Israeli attack and the possibility that the "Zionist regime" might take similar action in the future, the international community should impose severe diplomatic sanctions on that country. Seeking to confront the United States' diplomacy in the Osirak case – which, despite the U.S. government's open criticism of the Israeli operation, tried to moderate the international community's response to the incident – Iranian reprsentatives pointed out that the Americans would not be able divide the ranks of Muslim governments in the matter. At the IAEA, for example, the Iranians – calling for Israel's expulsion from the agency and even claiming, for the sake of the argument, that the Iraqi reactor had been serving only peaceful purposes – declared that should the United States try to use its financial contributions to the IAEA as a tool to prevent Israel's expulsion from the agency, their government would be prepared to cover the possible short-term losses of U.S. financial support to the organization. In addition, referring to a proposal made by Iran's president Ali Khamenei, the representatives of the Islamic Republic called for the establishment of a special NAM fund that would allocate money to the IAEA and hence free the agency from "imperialist domination."

Whereas Iran's approach to the Osirak incident stemmed, above all, from the Islamic Republic's desire to display and strengthen its ideological credentials, its effort to *mobilize the international community to stop Iraq's air attacks against the Bushehr nuclear site* resulted from an urgent war-time problem or vulnerability. Iranian officials.

who used the IAEA as the main diplomatic arena for pursuing the Bushehr case, strongly condemned the Iraqi actions and called them as deplorable as Israel's June 1981 attack against Osirak. The Iranians asserted that the international community's tame response to the Osirak incident had in fact encouraged Iraq to carry out its military operations against Bushehr and, in 1985, against Iran's nuclear research facilities in Tehran.

The Islamic Republic called on governments to express their unambiguous condemnation of the Iraqi actions and to take diplomatic steps against the regime of Saddam Hussein so that Iraq would not repeat its attacks. More generally, Iran urged governments to agree on international regulations that would prohibit armed attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes and called for the creation of an international convention for the purpose. Furthermore, at the 1985 NPT review conference, the Islamic Republic asked the members of the treaty to provide Iran with technical assistance so that its peaceful nuclear program could go ahead and the damages done to the Bushehr site be repaired. At the conference, Iranian delegates also unsuccessfully threatened to block the adoption of a final conference declaration in case the member states should fail to include an explicit reference to Iraq's Bushehr attacks in that document.

As for Iran's diplomacy at the IAEA, the officials of the Islamic Republic, in addition to calling for Iraq's expulsion from the agency, regularly requested the organization to dispatch fact-finding teams, together with nuclear safety experts, to Iran to verify the Iraqi attacks. The IAEA, however, declined the requests by noting that because the two Iranian reactors at Bushehr were still under construction and did not contain radioactive material, the facilities were not under IAEA safeguards and therefore did not fall under the agency's competence. Infuriated by the IAEA's position, and by the international community's general disinterest in the Bushehr issue, the representatives of the Islamic Republic countered by arguing that had foreign governments not obstructed the execution of their country's peaceful nuclear program, the work on the Bushehr-1 reactor would have already been finished. Finally, in early 1987, in an effort to pressure the IAEA, Iran transferred nuclear material to Bushehr, a move that led the agency to signal, in late 1987, its preparedness to get involved in the matter. By then, however, Iraq had already managed to inflict significant damage on the Bushehr facilities and to slow down the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

Despite the fact that, following the revolution, the authorities of post-Pahlavi Iran strongly criticized the content of the ousted Shah government's nuclear program, it did not take long for the Islamic Republic itself to declare that it was committed to studying and pursuing peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Using the same core rationalization as the Shah's government, the representatives of the post-revolutionary Iranian regime argued that their country needed nuclear energy in order to diversify its energy sources and to save its hydrocarbon riches for export. Moreover, the Iranians underscored the importance of nuclear science to their country's medical, agricultural, and industrial activities.

In order to distance post-Pahlavi Iran's nuclear activities from those of the Shah's government, the Islamic Republic also pointed out that unlike the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime, it would build its nuclear projects on locally acquired know-how. In addition, Iranian authorities expressed their willingness to share their nuclear resources with other interested states, especially with those of the developing world. Self-sufficiency was a key word in Islamic Iran's nuclear argumentation.

During the first half of the 1980s, the Islamic Republic's declared nuclear activities revolved around three areas: nuclear research, natural uranium exploration, and the completion of the two Bushehr nuclear reactors. Still, the agenda of the AEOI envisioned a whole range of Iranian nuclear projects, including nuclear fuel-cycle-related activities. Accordingly, between the Iranian revolution and the August 1988 cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war, the nuclear arms control operations of the Islamic Republic placed a lot of emphasis on *supporting the advancement of Iran's nuclear program*.

In pursuing this objective, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic focused, first of all, on categorically rejecting the claim that their government had nuclear weapons ambitions. Pointing out that Iran was strictly following the doctrines and principles of Islam, they maintained that their country was interested only in peaceful applications of nuclear energy. As a Muslim country, the representatives of the Islamic Republic underscored, Iran recognized the importance of science but also understood that scientific activities had to rely on virtue and morality. Otherwise, science could be misused for "anti-humanitarian" purposes.

Secondly, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic dealt with the concrete problems that were hampering Iran's nuclear activities. Thus, for example, Iranian representatives used international arms control fora to voice their strong objection to the

diplomatic measures taken, above all, by the United States to obstruct Iran's efforts to finish the Bushehr reactors. Similarly, the Iranians voiced their condemnation of the nuclear supply policies of the West German government which, concerned about Iran's nuclear intentions, did not allow German firms to continue work at the Bushehr site. Finally, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained that France's nuclear policies, too, pointedly illustrated how Iran and other developing countries were subjected to arbitrary and unjust treatment by the major nuclear supplier countries. To support this claim, the Iranians pointed to the French government's reluctance to transfer enriched uranium to Iran in spite of the fact that the Iranians actually owned a 10-percent share of the Eurodif enrichment facility. Also, the Iranians pointed out that France was unwilling to pay either principal or interest for the money lent to Eurodif by the ousted Shah in 1974.

More broadly, and in line with its objective of *profiling the Islamic Republic as a champion of developing countries' nuclear rights*, Iran sought to diplomatically support its nuclear activities also by maintaining that NWS had neglected their responsibility, under the NPT, to facilitate and promote the efforts by NNWS to apply nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In addition to its criticism of what it viewed as the inadequate implementation of article IV of the NPT, the Islamic Republic strongly denounced the application of nuclear export controls outside the NPT framework. By greatly hampering the ability of NNWS to execute national nuclear projects, Iranian authorities asserted, extra-NPT export controls, such as those of the NSG, undermined the independence and sovereignty of NNWS and, therefore, were illegal and totally unacceptable. In the Iranian view, NNWS were entitled to a guaranteed access to nuclear materials, science, and technology.

The Iranians – according to whom the major powers' nuclear export controls testified to those countries' attempt to keep the developing world in a backward state and under their domination – further stressed that the safeguards system of the IAEA was effective enough, and indeed the only legitimate international arrangement, for ensuring that NNWS respect their legal obligation not to acquire nuclear armaments. The officials of the Islamic Republic pointed out that their government would be ready to discuss the application of additional nuclear verification measures if called for by other members of the NPT, but only on the condition that any such measures would stem from a consensus decision made by all the states parties and that they would be incorporated into the IAEA system. As far as the existing verification activities of the IAEA were

concerned, the Islamic Republic noted that they imposed too heavy a financial burden on countries with modest nuclear activities and failed to make a contribution to the prevention of vertical nuclear weapons proliferation. In addition, Iran stressed that states from the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa should have a better representation in the agency and particularly in its Board of Governors.

As the discussion above already suggests, the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations during this period also aimed at improving Iran's access to foreign nuclear assistance. Thus, the Iranian representatives, again building their argumentation principally on article IV of the NPT, called on nuclear supplier countries as well as the IAEA – which the Iranians criticized for being more interested in regulating developing countries' nuclear activities than in facilitating them – to help Third World countries to improve their scientific and technical capabilities in the nuclear field. The officials of the Islamic Republic spoke, among others, of international assistance to developing countries' educational efforts and of the sharing of nuclear research results with the Third World. Furthermore, the Iranians asked developed states to help developing countries in financing nuclear projects – for instance, through the establishment of a special IAEA fund for the purpose – and to create an international nuclear fuel bank that would ensure that Third World states have a secure long-term access to nuclear fuel supplies.

In addition to calling on developed countries to assist Third World states in the nuclear field, the Islamic Republic also took other steps to support and promote its nuclear program. Thus, for example, Iran allied itself with those developing countries that requested the director-general of the IAEA to annually report to the agency's general conference on the measures the member states had taken to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy and international nuclear cooperation. In a more dramatic step, the Islamic Republic also implied that should the execution of article IV of the NPT remain inadequate, it might not be willing to support the planned extension of the NPT's duration in 1995.

6.4.1.2 Objectives vs. goals

During the period between the Iranian revolution and the end of the Iran–Iraq war in August 1988, the objectives of Iran's nuclear arms control operations testified to the Islamic Republic's systematic reliance on nuclear arms control diplomacy for the

promotion of its security interests. To begin with, security considerations guided Iran's diplomatic efforts against the major powers' nuclear weapons policies. As representatives of a revolutionary regime which positioned itself in opposition to the major powers and the existing international order, and which declared its intention to free Iran from what it portrayed as the shackles of foreign domination and exploitation, the authorities of the Islamic Republic did not rule out the possibility that the major powers could use nuclear weapons against their country.

The concern over nuclear weapons use against the Islamic Republic, whether intentional or accidental, also explained the attempts made by Iranian officials to create a diplomatic front composed of Third World states to call for international measures that would prevent vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear armaments and ultimately eliminate such weapons. The same applied for the fact that the Iranians supported international efforts to establish a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. The officials of the Islamic Republic believed that such a ban would not only hamper the existing nuclear powers' attempts to improve their nuclear arsenals, but possibly also prevent countries in Iran's neighbourhood, both in the Middle East and South Asia, from obtaining nuclear armaments.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic's security concerns manifested themselves in Iran's diplomatic calls on NWS for the provision of positive and negative security assurances to NNWS, in the Islamic Republic's support for the creation of NWFZ and zones of peace in various parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, and in the strong diplomatic criticism levelled at Israel's de facto status as a nuclear weapon state and at the Jewish state's use of military force against Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility. Still, in the final analysis, the only urgent Iranian security problem to which the Islamic Republic tried to respond through nuclear arms control diplomacy concerned Iraq's war-time attacks on the Bushehr nuclear reactor site.

While during the Islamic Republic's first decade Iran's nuclear arms control operations were mainly steered by security calculations, there were also other interests that Iranian leaders sought to advance by means of nuclear arms control diplomacy. Indeed, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic actions against the major powers' nuclear weapons policies, its calls for the creation of NWFZ and zones of peace, together with its diplomatic attacks against Israel's nuclear armaments, can all be seen as attempts to improve Iran's power position in the international arena. Viewing nuclear weapons as a source of national power, transformable into concrete influence in international politics,

the Islamic Republic had an interest in at least trying to take that source of influence away from its adversaries and competitors.

There was an ideological dimension in Iran's nuclear arms control operations, too. For one thing, Iran's nuclear diplomacy was partly guided by the Islamic Republic's ideological objection to a class of weaponry capable of inflicting incomprehensible damage and of even threatening the survival of humanity. For another thing, the Islamic Republic saw nuclear weapons as instruments that helped to maintain the status quo in international relations and enabled the major powers – and the Cold War superpowers, in particular – and other states, such as Israel, to pursue destructive military and foreign policies. From the perspective of the Islamic Republic's black and white worldview, then, nuclear armaments were an anathema to Iran's leaders.

In a similar manner, Iran's vehement diplomatic criticism of Israel's and South Africa's nuclear activities had a strong ideological element in it,[29] and the same can be said about the Islamic Republic's rejection of the export controls placed on nuclear transfers to the developing world. At the same time, Iranian authorities regarded an active nuclear arms control diplomacy, identifying itself with the interests of the Islamic world and the Third World at large, as a way to advance post-revolutionary Iran's prestige and influence among developing countries.

As already demonstrated above, the Islamic Republic used international arms control fora also to defend and promote its nuclear program which it defined as an exclusively peaceful national effort to serve Iran's economic and other welfare needs. In this sense, then, Iran's nuclear arms control operations during the Islamic Republic's first decade partly stemmed from an attempt to improve the prosperity, economic development, and well-being of the Iranian people. However, the most recent information about the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities in the 1980s – which Iranian authorities were forced to reveal to the IAEA in the course of the post-2002 diplomatic crisis over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program – strongly suggests that Iran pursued a nuclear power program for military reasons as well.

The fact that the Islamic Republic launched a uranium enrichment program in 1985 – at a time when it was unable to make progress in the construction of the Bushehr

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[29] Of course, when the practical needs of the Iranian regime so dictated, the authorities of the Islamic Republic were prepared to quietly put their ideological principles aside. Note here, for example, the fact that in 1982, the Islamic Republic purchased 531 tons yellowcake from South Africa. The Iranians reported this transaction to the IAEA eight years later in 1990. (*Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* 2005: 38)

reactors, the only Iranian facilities that could have potentially needed nuclear reactor fuel – greatly undermines the official Iranian explanation according to which its secret activities in the area uranium enrichment were solely for peaceful purposes.[30] Thus, on the basis of Iran's undeclared enrichment program – which, even if it was only rudimentary in nature, points to an intention to produce HEU for nuclear armaments – as well as on the basis of other secret Iranian nuclear activities, it can be concluded that the Islamic Republic resorted, most likely, to arms control diplomacy also in order to *conceal and draw attention away from its nuclear weapons ambitions*. This specific Iranian objective suggests that the efforts made by Iranian officials in the 1980s to defend and promote their country's nuclear projects through arms control diplomacy stemmed not only from welfare-related considerations but from military calculations as well.[31]

6.4.2 From the cease-fire to the CTBT

6.4.2.1 The objectives

Although, in many ways, post-revolutionary Iran's nuclear arms control operations during the Islamic Republic's first decade had been a reaction to the ideological, political, and military competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, the

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[30] As pointed out by a former deputy director-general of the IAEA, Iranian authorities have not been able to credibly explain why they had decided to pursue a uranium enrichment program when there was no short- or medium-term need to fuel any electrical nuclear power plant in the country (*IHT*, 14 September 2005).

[31] Such a conclusion can be further supported, among others, by the statements made by Iran's leaders in the course of the 1980s. Note in this connection, for example, the remarks reportedly made in a speech at the AEOI in February 1987 by Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic's president at the time: "Regarding atomic energy, we need it now [...]. Our nation has always been threatened from outside. The least we can do to face this danger is to let our enemies know that we can defend ourselves. Therefore, every step you take here is in defence of your country and your revolution. With this in mind, you should work hard and at great speed" (cited in Spector 1993: 142–143). To give an another example of the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons was hardly a distant idea to the Iranian leadership, at the end of September 2006, an Iranian news agency published an 18-year-old letter on its website which indicated that Muhsin Rizai, the then commander of the IRGC, was of the opinion that the Islamic Republic would need "a considerable number of laser and nuclear weapons" in order to be able to confront Iraq's attacks in the war. Within hours after the letter's appearance, the news agency was ordered by the SNSC to edit the text and to remove the word 'nuclear' from the letter (*IHT*, 5 October 2006). It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to elaborate on the factors behind Iran's presumed interest in nuclear armaments. Basically, however, such factors can be reduced to the same fundamental foreign policy goals which have guided the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations. Of course, considerations pertaining to domestic politics have also played a role in Iran's nuclear activities. Chubin (2006: 8, 12), for example, stresses this point by arguing that Iranian authorities have used their nuclear projects as an instrument to rally nationalist sentiment and to legitimate the country's Islamic regime.

unravelling of the Cold War international system revealed that there was a strong element of continuity in Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control diplomacy.

Accordingly, following the end of Iran's eight-year war against Iraq and of the Cold War between the two superpowers, the Islamic Republic continued to actively promote the objective of *universal and total nuclear disarmament*. Pointing to the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and defining the mere existence of such armaments as spiritually and morally unacceptable, Iranian officials declared that the elimination of nuclear armaments was the most important issue on the post-Cold War international arms control agenda. While recognizing and welcoming the achievements made in the area of nuclear arms control in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the Islamic Republic criticized the major powers for the fact that even though dramatic changes had taken place in the international system, the military policies of those powers continued to be anchored in the possession of nuclear armaments.

In the Iranian analysis, the nuclear powers' persistent reluctance to revise their military policies testified to those states' false belief that nuclear armaments served as a source of political power and national prestige. The officials of the Islamic Republic also maintained that the post-Cold War emphasis placed by the major powers on the concept of nuclear non-proliferation, and not on nuclear arms control, was a diplomatic attempt to divert international attention away from their own nuclear weapons arsenals. Strongly objecting to the major powers' continuing reliance on nuclear armaments, Iranian officials warned that the nuclear policies of the major powers fuelled nuclear arms racing and emboldened regional powers to pursue their own nuclear capabilities. Moreover, the Iranians argued that nuclear weapons were not capable of providing solutions to the security problems of the post-Cold War world or even acting as credible deterrents against conventional, chemical, or biological weapons.

As states had no rational and certainly no moral basis for their possession of nuclear armaments, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted, the world needed a new security order in which nuclear arms would play no role. As an alternative to the military notions of deterrence and balance of power, the Islamic Republic introduced, in September 1994, the concept of a "defensive security scheme" which was explained by the Iranians to capture the idea of an international order free from nuclear armaments and other kinds of WMD and in which states' armed forces would serve only defensive purposes. More concretely, the Iranians called on governments to start negotiations on a

"comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory" international convention that would ban nuclear weapons.

While using international diplomatic fora to advance the creation of a universal nuclear weapons treaty, the officials of the Islamic Republic called for the adoption of a set of international measures that would pave the ground for the materialization of the nuclear ban and address non-nuclear states' topical nuclear weapons-related concerns. The question of security assurances was among the arms control issues raised in this connection by the Iranians. Seeking – together with other non-nuclear states – to *obtain positive and negative security assurances from NWS*, Iranian officials kept pointing out that NNWS were entitled to such assurances in return for their acceptance of the NPT. According to the Iranians, the assurances would not only strengthen the security of NNWS, but also reduce the possibility that non-nuclear states would try to acquire nuclear weapons capabilities for themselves.

As far as PSA were concerned, the Islamic Republic welcomed the UN Security Council's resolution 984 of April 1995 in which each of the five NWS and permanent members of the Security Council promised to immediately act in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter in case any of NNWS would become a victim of the use or threat of use of nuclear armaments. At the same time, however, Iran expressed its dissatisfaction with the fact that the resolution did not legally require the council to automatically respond to the use or threat of use of such weapons. In addition, the Islamic Republic had hoped that any use or threat of use of nuclear armaments would have been explicitly defined as a threat to international peace and security and, resultantly, automatically obliged NWS to "use all necessary means in defence of the victims in accordance with the UN Charter."

Yet, at the end of the day, Iran's diplomacy placed more importance on the issue of NSA. Iran's approach to the subject centered on the demand that NWS should agree to the establishment of a legally binding international instrument which would oblige them to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear arms. As one option for such an international arrangement, Iranian officials promoted the idea of a special protocol that would be attached to the NPT. In an alternative scenario, the Iranians alluded to the creation of a separate international convention for the purpose.

In Iran's view, the Additional Protocol II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco – which had created a NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and in which NWS had given NSA to the members of that treaty – acted as a model for a comprehensive international

arrangement. The officials of the Islamic Republic referred to Protocol II of the Rarotonga Treaty – which had established a NWFZ in the South Pacific and in which NWS had committed themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear explosive devices against any treaty member or against each other's territories within the region – as another existing model for international deliberations on NSA. In order to strengthen its diplomatic position in the matter, the Islamic Republic, together with a host of other NAM countries, drew a linkage between its acceptance of the extension of the NPT's duration and the progress made in the diplomatic talks on NSA.

Given the diplomatic emphasis placed by Iran on the creation of a legally binding international NSA instrument, the Islamic Republic adopted a critical view towards the unilateral NSA declarations that were made by NWS in 1995. The Iranians expressed their disappointment at the fact that the statements were only politically binding and, above all, at the fact that, of the five NWS, only China presented a declaration which made no conditions or reservations to the application of NSA. Iran's NSA diplomacy also included active participation in the legal process that led the ICJ to declare, in July 1996, as an advisory ruling, that the use or threat of use of nuclear armaments would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict. Not unexpectedly, the Islamic Republic hailed the ICJ's ruling as a victory for its nuclear diplomacy.

Closely related to its activities on the issue of security assurances, Iran also sought to *advance the creation of international mechanisms that would increase nuclear transparency*. According to the representatives of the Islamic Republic, such mechanisms would generate confidence in inter-state relations and reassure non-nuclear states of the nuclear powers' peaceful military intentions. With these considerations in mind, the Iranians insisted on the inclusion of the category of nuclear weapons and other WMD in the United Nations' arms register. Iran's understanding of the definition of nuclear weapons encompassed not only states' actual nuclear armaments but their fissile material stockpiles as well.

Yet, on multilateral arms control fora, the control of fissile materials was already being discussed as an independent subject. Iran supported the UN General Assembly's December 1993 resolution in which the member states called for the creation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively veriable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear armaments and other nuclear explosive devices. But as the diplomatic consultations on the mandate of the treaty negotiations

started, it became clear that Iran's views on the content of the planned convention differed from those of many other states. Iran belonged to a small minority of countries which insisted that the treaty should not only ban the future production of fissile materials for military purposes but control the existing fissile material stockpiles as well.

While calling on governments to negotiate a comprehensive fissile ban treaty, the representatives of the Islamic Republic also put forward an alternative diplomatic mechanism in which states would create a fissile ban through a treaty amendment to the NPT. Moreover, prior to the 1995 NPT review conference, which was charged with the task of making a decision on the extension of the NPT's duration, Iran noted that it would support "limited renewal" of the NPT only if "careful attention" was paid at the conference to the views of the delegations that called for a ban on the production, development, and stockpiling of fissile material for weapons purposes.

As it ultimately turned out, neither avenue of the Islamic Republic's two-pronged approach to the fissile ban question had the chance of becoming accepted by the majority of the parties involved in the diplomatic deliberations on the matter. Actually, even though the members of the CD – the body that had been designated as the negotiating forum for fissile ban talks – managed to agree, in March 1995, on a mandate for the treaty negotiations, the talks in Geneva soon drifted into a deadlock. Regardless of the stalemate, the officials of the Islamic Republic remained committed to *promoting the establishment of an international fissile ban dealing with past and future production of fissile material.*

Iran's arms control operations around the issue of nuclear testing constituted yet another major element in the diplomatic Iranian effort to pave the ground for universal and total elimination of nuclear armaments. In the Islamic Republic's opinion, the world needed a global treaty to ban nuclear weapon tests for two reasons: primarily for preventing the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear armaments and, secondarily, for putting an end to the adverse health and environmental effects resulting from the test explosions. Referring to technological advances that enabled the detection of underground nuclear tests with a high degree of certainty and to the dramatically improved political climate in international relations, Iran maintained that the time was ripe for an immediate establishment of a CTBT.

The Islamic Republic`s response to the initiative made by five non-nuclear states at the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1963 PTBT in 1988 was indicative of

the Iranian diplomatic approach to the issue of nuclear testing. The initiative, which called for the organization of a PTBT amendment conference deliberating the conversion of the PTBT into a CTBT, was strongly supported by the Islamic Republic. Similarly, together with other NAM delegations, Iranian representatives used the 1990 NPT review conference to pressure NWS to agree on the creation of a CTBT. And after the eventual failure of the PTBT amendment conference of January 1991, the Islamic Republic called for the adoption of a CTBT before the 1995 NPT review and extension conference. In fact, Iranian officials hardened their position on the CTBT issue by explicitly declaring that their government's support for the NPT's extension was dependent on the progress made in the test ban matter.

In the end, in the face of mounting international and domestic pressure, NWS agreed to take part in international negotiations on a CTBT. Consequently, in January 1994, the CD adopted a mandate for the CTBT negotiations, and Iran's nuclear arms control operations correspondingly began to *advocate the creation of a CTBT which would ban explosive and non-explosive testing of nuclear weapons and not hamper the states parties' peaceful nuclear activities or undermine their national security*. In the initial stages of the deliberations at the CD, Iran's negotiators criticized the nuclear powers for their effort to set the terms of the negotiations without any regard to the interests of non-nuclear states. Above all, the Iranians emphasized that in addition to being considered an instrument against horizontal nuclear proliferation, the planned treaty should also – in fact, primarily – be viewed as a tool to control nuclear powers' weapons development – as a move towards complete nuclear disarmament.

As far as the content of the CTBT was concerned, the Iranians – who were of the opinion that the negotiations should be brought to an end before the 1995 NPT conference and who linked their support for a limited extension of the NPT with developments in the CTBT talks – emphasized that the treaty should lead to a general and complete cessation of nuclear tests by "all states in all environments for all time." Thus, the negotiators of the Islamic Republic wanted to ban both explosive and non-explosive testing of nuclear weapons. Still, at the initial stages of the negotiations, the Iranians did not object to the idea, strongly advocated by China, that states would be allowed, under the CTBT, to conduct PNE for civilian purposes. This Iranian stance stemmed from the Islamic Republic's general attempt to eliminate from the treaty any provisions that could be later legally exploited for obstructing states' peaceful nuclear activities.

What the Iranians did object to was the U.S. negotiation position that would have allowed NWS to carry out nuclear explosions of very low yield for the sake of keeping their nuclear weapons safe and reliable. By the same token, the Islamic Republic opposed the French and British delegates' attempts to reserve their countries the right to conduct, in exceptional circumstances, nuclear explosions without limitations on yield in order to ensure the safety of their weapons arsenals. In the Iranian view, the exemption proposals put forward by the nuclear powers were unacceptable because they could potentially be activated to conceal weapons development activities.

As for the proposal, presented by some delegations during the CTBT talks, that the future treaty should impose a ban both on the conduct of nuclear explosions and on preparations for such explosions, Iran expressed its basic support for the initiative but simultaneously pointed out that defining what constituted test preparations would be a difficult task. Above all, the negotiators of the Islamic Republic were concerned over the possibility that a treaty provision referring to test preparations could be exploited by those who wished, for political reasons, to baselessly accuse certain countries of laying groundwork for a nuclear weapon test. Yet, on a related issue, Iran was unambiguous in calling for a treaty provision that would oblige nuclear powers to shut down all sites hitherto used for nuclear testing. The Islamic Republic also demanded that all equipment specifically designed for nuclear test purposes should be destroyed.

As regards the subject of the CTBT's verification mechanism, a question which self-evidently played a central role in the treaty negotiations, the representatives of the Islamic Republic called for a universal, non-discriminatory, technically effective, and internationally supervised verification system. The Iranians expressed the view that verification activities under the CTBT should rely first and foremost on the application of seismic technologies and on OSI. Iran did not rule out the introduction of other verification measures into the planned system, but added that such complementary steps should be cost-effective, not affect states' ability to pursue peaceful nuclear activities, and be taken only under multilateral diplomatic control and supervision.

In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic did not adopt a strict approach to the question of which international body should be charged with the task of implementing the CTBT and conducting the verification actitivities under the treaty. Iranian negotiators noted that should the task be given to the IAEA, the agency's technical capabilities would have to be strengthened and the IAEA's decision-making structures revised. On the other hand, the Iranians said that if governments would decide to

establish an independent agency for the CTBT, the organization should remain slim and cost-effective. Also, the Islamic Republic stressed that the planned CTBTO should have the ability to independently analyze verification information and to disseminate it to individual member states. Finally, in support of an initiative tabled by Japan, Iran argued that the CTBTO would need only one major decision-making organ which would comprise all the states parties, each with one vote.

In regards to the planned test-ban treaty's EIF, the Islamic Republic was of the opinion that the CTBT should enter into force only after all NWS and threshold nuclear states had joined it. Simultaneously, however, the Iranians recognized that the treaty's EIF should not remain hostage to a few states' refusal to join the instrument. As a result, the Islamic Republic stressed that incentives should be offered to states that hesitated to join the CTBT and, conversely, countries that planned to stay outside the treaty should be subjected to international "punitive measures."

On the issue of treaty withdrawal, Iran took a uncompromising stand: the withdrawal of "nuclear-weapon states and other nuclear advanced countries" from the CTBT should not be allowed because any other decision would compromise the treaty's fundamental purpose. Relatedly, the officials of the Islamic Republic demanded that the final text of the CTBT should include clear provisions on how to deal with countries that would decide to withdraw from the treaty. The Iranians themselves alluded, once again, to the application international sanctions and also emphasized that each case of withdrawal should be treated with uniform criteria, without political calculations.

After the end of the first year of the CTBT negotiations, during which the national delegations had presented their initial positions on the planned treaty, governments intensified their bargaining over the content of the CTBT and, in April–May 1995, gathered to the NPT review and extension conference. At the conference, Iran belonged to a group of 14 non-aligned countries that objected to the indefinite extension of the NPT and wanted the treaty to be extended for rolling fixed periods of 25 years, each extension being dependent on the achievement of certain treaty-related objectives. The conclusion of the CTBT was one of the objectives expressly referred to by the group. Even though Iran and its conference allies failed to achieve the objective of the NPT's limited extension, they nevertheless managed to obtain, in return for their support of the NPT's indefinite extension, a politically binding commitment from NWS that the CTBT would be finished no later than in 1996.

Soon after the NPT conference in June 1995, however, the government of France announced that before signing the CTBT, it would conduct a final series of underground nuclear tests by May 1996. The Iranians strongly criticized France's decision and portrayed it as an indication of the reluctance of NWS to accept limitations to their nuclear activities. With China already having conducted a nuclear test in May 1995, the Islamic Republic condemned what it alluded to as the "nuclear test race" and insisted that pending the conclusion of the CTBT, nuclear powers should refrain from further nuclear testing.

After the start of the final round of CTBT negotiations, on 22 February 1996, Iranian negotiators presented a draft or model CTBT to the national delegations for consideration – a significant sign of the Iranians' active role in the talks and of their intention to secure the Islamic Republic's CTBT-related interests. In the draft treaty and in subsequent bargaining over the content of the final test ban document, Iran's negotiators continued to point out that the CTBT should ban nuclear tests at any place and of any yield – even if, at the same time, the Iranians expressed their acceptance of the idea of PNE for civilian purposes, if they were to be carried out under strictly defined conditions.

As far as the question of nuclear test sites was concerned, the Islamic Republic's position remained essentially unchanged. Apart from insisting that CTBT member states should be obliged to close down all tests sites and to destroy all equipment used for nuclear tests, Iranian negotiators called on governments to provide, in an act of transparency and confidence-building, the future CTBTO – by now designated as the international agency responsible for implementing the test-ban treaty – with detailed information about their past nuclear tests. For the same reason, the Iranians added, the states parties should also be required to notify the CTBTO of "any explosion using 300 tonnes or greater of TNT-equivalent blasting material detonated as a single explosion anywhere on its territory, or at any place under its jurisdiction or control."

On the question of verification, Iranian negotiators lent their support for a verification system built on the IMS. Under the IMS – consisting of a global, two-tier seismic system, supported by hydroacoustic, radionuclide, and infrasound networks – the Islamic Republic agreed to run one primary seismological station, two auxiliary seismological stations, one radionuclide station, and an infrasound station on Iranian soil.

In contrast, the Islamic Republic's negotiators, who maintained that the IMS provided a sufficient basis to verify state compliance under the CTBT in an efficient and reliable manner, had major reservations on the use of data derived from NTM – that is, from intelligence sources – in verification. While they ultimately had no choice but to accept the fact that NTM would play a role in the implementation of the CTBT, the Iranians, however, insisted that NTM-generated information would have to be viewed as secondary to the data produced by the IMS. Specifically, the representatives of the Islamic Republic demanded that information obtained through espionage and human intelligence should be completely excluded from the definition of NTM. In addition, the Iranians insisted that the states parties should be allowed to rely only on IMS data when making a request for an on-site inspection in the territory of another member state.

Furthermore, Iran's negotiators stressed that the data transmitted by the IMS to the IDC, a CTBTO unit, should be processed, analyzed, and reported on by the center, in addition to which all the states parties should have an access not only to all information made available to IDC, but also to all data obtained by the CTBTO through its verification activities. While the Iranians supported OSI as a means of CTBT verification, they nonetheless noted that before resorting to such inspections, the states parties should make every effort to clarify and resolve among themselves any matter causing concern over treaty compliance. Only if such consultations were to prove unsuccessful, the representatives of the Islamic Republic underscored, should the mechanism of OSI be activated. And even then, the Iranians continued, the application of the most intrusive verification methods should be left as the last resort.

Given the central role reserved for the CTBTO's Executive Council in the organization's decision-making, it was not surprising that the national delegations taking part in the CTBT talks held heated debates on the council's future composition. As for the Iranians, they called for the creation of a 65-member council that would be elected by the CTBT's Conference of the States Parties and be composed of five regional groupings. Iran's officials emphasized that each state party should have the right to serve, on the basis of the principle of rotation, in the council and condemned the efforts by NWS and some other countries to secure permanent seats in it.

Still, the Iranians did not rule out the possibility that a single country from a regional group could be repeatedly prevented from serving in the council. They argued that it was the regional groups' prerogative to determine which countries were designated to the council. Iran's stance stemmed, above all, from the fact that most of the national

delegations were of the opinion that Israel belonged to the regional grouping of Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, whereas the Islamic Republic viewed Israel's membership in that group as a recipe for permanent "political problems" that would seriously complicate the process of selecting the members of the Executive Council.

Yet, Iran had to eventually accept that the final treaty text placed Israel into the group of Middle Eastern and South Asian states. In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic had to recognize that its negotiation objectives with regard to the role of NTM information in CTBT verification failed to materialize, for governments ultimately agreed on the possibility of an OSI launched on the basis of NTM information. The third major diplomatic defeat experienced by Iran during the CTBT talks concerned the proposal put forward by the Islamic Republic and a host of other NAM countries which called on the NWS to commit themselves – through an explicit text provision included in the preamble of the CTBT – to the notion of complete nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework.

Disappointments in these three thematic areas led the Islamic Republic to declare that it would not be ready to accept the final draft of the CTBT. Together with India – whose negotiators had blocked the adoption of the final text of the CTBT by consensus and prevented the text from being attached to the final report of the CD's test-ban committee – Iran refused to allow the CD to transmit the test-ban committee's final report to the UN General Assembly. The Islamic Republic explained its diplomatic behaviour by noting that the treaty had failed to meet the expectations of the majority of the negotiating states and that the final treaty text had "grossly tilted towards the position of a few nuclear-weapon states and their allies." Also, Iranian authorities accused the nuclear powers of having dictated the course of the negotiations and of having pressured other states to accept their demands.

Yet, in the end, diplomatic obstructionism brought no benefits for the Islamic Republic. Thus, as the UN General Assembly, on 10 September 1996, voted for the adoption of the CTBT, Iran was among the 158 countries expressing their support for the treaty. While arguing that it was better to have a flawed test-ban treaty than no treaty at all, the Islamic Republic nonetheless subsequently recorded its dissatisfaction with the CTBT's preamble, with the composition of the CTBTO's Executive Council, and with the role of NTM data in verification to the declarations it attached to its CTBT signature document of 24 September 1996.

Although Iran's nuclear arms control operations during the first half of the 1990s heavily focused on the CTBT negotiations, on the creation of a new international arms control treaty, the officials of the Islamic Republic also kept promoting other foreign policy objectives through nuclear arms control diplomacy. First of all, thus, the Iranians continued their effort to diplomatically *support the advancement of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program*. Iran's representatives used international arms control fora to dispel the suspicions and deny the outright accusations that their country was trying to develop nuclear weapons. According to them, the false accusations made against Iran, particularly by the United States and Israel, were part of a long-lived political campaign against the Islamic Republic.

As before, the Islamic Republic asserted that religious, moral, and humanitarian considerations explained its aversion to nuclear weapons. Iran's experience as the latest victim of the use of WMD, the officials of the Islamic Republic added, had only strengthened their country's opposition to such armaments. Iranian representatives also asserted that nuclear weapons were military useless to Iran and that their country simply did not possess the financial means and technological capabilities for a nuclear weapons program.

And as before, the Iranians claimed that the Islamic Republic pursued a peaceful nuclear program in order to satisfy its electricity needs and to save its hydrogarbon resources for export. In addition, the officials of the Islamic Republic noted that their country's nuclear power program was part of the general national effort to improve Iran's scientific, technical, and industrical infrastructures. Lastly, the Iranians stressed that their government viewed nuclear power as an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuels and that it had already invested so much in the country's nuclear program that it would be imprudent to put an end to it.

According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, the accusations claiming that Iran was seeking nuclear weapons had greatly damaged Iran's ability to execute its nuclear program. As a result, the Islamic Republic continued to resort to nuclear arms control diplomacy as a means to improve its access to nuclear materials and nuclear power technology. Strongly criticizing Western powers' and especially the United States' attempts to hamper their country's nuclear efforts – which Iranian authorities labelled as policies of "nuclear apartheid" or "new colonialism" – the representatives of the Islamic Republic accused nuclear supplier countries of political double standard and of violating article IV of the NPT.

In the Iranian view, all extra-NPT export control arrangements were illegal and should therefore be dismantled. Still, the authorities of the Islamic Republic expressed their readiness to discuss the issue of export controls if such deliberations would alleviate nuclear supplier countries' proliferation concerns. Accordingly, Iran called for the establishment of a diplomatic forum composed of all NPT states parties that would decide on the application nuclear export controls. At the 1995 NPT review and extension conference, the Islamic Republic asked the states parties to create a NPT ad hoc committee responsible for formulating export control guidelines that would replace those of the existing extra-NPT arrangements.

Iranian representatives argued that such a committee should also be given the task of ensuring that the non-nuclear parties to the NPT would have a full and unhindered access to nuclear materials and technology. Moreover, the Iranians noted that the goverments participating in the committee's work ought to refrain from nuclear relations with states that had not joined the NPT and not accepted IAEA full-scope safeguards, and that the committee could discuss measures to strengthen the verification system of the NPT as well as any other matter pertaining to the implementation of the treaty's article IV.

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation on article IV of the NPT also included calls for increased nuclear assistance from the developed world to developing states. Iranian officials called on nuclear supplier countries to share their nuclear know-how with Third World countries and to financially help developing countries to execute peaceful nuclear programs. According to Iran, such assistance would help to bridge the welfare gap between the North and the South and to promote peace and stability in the post-Cold War world. The Islamic Republic also specifically called on the IAEA to increase its technical and financial assistance to Third World governments as well as to prevent nuclear suppliers from baselessly building barriers to developing countries' procurement of nuclear materials and technology from the international market. Overall, the strong third-worldist element in Iran's argumentation on matters pertaining to peaceful uses of nuclear energy testified not only to the Islamic Republic's persistent attempt to defend its right to pursue a nuclear program and to improve its access to nuclear imports and assistance, but also to Iran's diplomatic objective of *portraying the Islamic Republic as a defender of developing countries' nuclear rights*.

As far as the IAEA was concerned, the Islamic Republic continued to use it as a central arena to *promote the establishment of an international treaty banning armed*

attacks against nuclear facilities, whether in operation or under construction. Iran stressed that the treaty should contain a mechanism to punish the aggressors and named the UN Security Council as the body responsible for deciding on the punitive measures taken against them. Under the Iranian-promoted treaty, the IAEA would be charged with the task of helping the victim states with radiation protection and other necessary assistance.

Although the Islamic Republic viewed the IAEA as an international organization whose main responsibility was to support and promote the member states' peaceful nuclear activities, it was the regulatory aspect of the agency's mandate which came to dominate Iran's relations with the IAEA. On the one hand, in an effort to clear up suspicions about its nuclear program, the Islamic Republic declared in 1991 that apart from the routine agency inspections, it would allow the IAEA to visit any location in Iran in order to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear activities in the country. The inspections carried out by the agency pursuant to the Iranian declaration – both of which found the Islamic Republic in compliance with the NPT, a fact which was thereafter actively referred to by Iranian authorities – took place in February 1992 and November 1993.

On the other hand, the international consensus emerging in the early 1990s that there was an urgent need to improve the IAEA's verification capabilities led the Islamic Republic to adopt a diplomatic course aiming to *secure that the strengthening process would not undermine its security or hamper its peaceful nuclear activities.* Consequently, while expressing their support for the international efforts to improve the verification capabilities of the IAEA and calling on governments to back the agency's regulatory activities, Iran's officials refrained from presenting detailed stands on the individual steps adopted to strengthen the IAEA's verification system and, instead, focused on discussing the pitfalls of such steps.

Given that the international debate on improved IAEA safeguards was essentially targeted against countries like Iran, believed to be pursuing nuclear armaments, the representatives of the Islamic Republic demanded, in the first place, that the additional verification measures agreed on by the international community should prompt all governments to finally recognize that the IAEA was the only legitimate body to verify non-nuclear NPT parties' treaty compliance. Secondly, the Iranians emphasized that the improved verification system of the IAEA should not be exploited as a political tool to exert diplomatic pressure on or to penalize individual countries. By the same token,

Iranian authorities noted that enhanced monitoring of the nuclear activities of NNWS should not jeopardize those countries' legitimate state secrets.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic stressed that the strengthening of IAEA safeguards should not have a negative impact on NPT states parties' economic and technological development. In fact, Iran's authorities were of the opinion that in exchange for agreeing to put their nuclear activities under increased international scrutiny, NNWS – and developing countries, in particular – were entitled to guarantees of nuclear transfers and international nuclear assistance from nuclear supplier countries. In yet another effort to couple its diplomatic argumentation on strengthened IAEA safeguards with its other nuclear arms control objectives, the Islamic Republic pointed out that from the viewpoint of nuclear disarmament, enhanced international monitoring of non-nuclear states' nuclear activities was only a secondary issue: vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons continued to be the main problem for the international community.

As far as Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations in the regional context were concerned, Iran's effort to *prevent Iraq from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability* was a key objective for the Islamic Republic's post-Iran-Iraq war nuclear diplomacy. Yet, because it did not want to burden its already tense post-war relations with Iraq or to diplomatically provoke other Arab governments, Iran refrained from an aggressive diplomacy in the matter. Instead, it made general warnings about the threat of nuclear weapons in its neighbourhood and referred to the urgent need to create a NWFZ in the Middle East. In addition, the Islamic Republic's regular allusions to Israel's nuclear weapons acted as a diplomatically convenient way for Iranian authorities to draw international attention to its adversaries' nuclear capabilities.

After the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, however, the scenario of Iraq getting hold of a nuclear bomb stopped being an urgent concern for the Iranian government. The steps taken by the IAEA to neutralize Iraq's nuclear capabilities – which were unequivocally supported by the Islamic Republic, even if Iranian officials did express their displeasure with the "unconventional" Iraq-related weapons inspection mechanism created by the major powers through the UN Security Council resolution 687 – allowed Iran to shift the focus of its diplomatic argumentation on regional nuclear arms control to Israel.

The Islamic Republic's diplomatic efforts to *achieve the nuclear disarmament of Israel* based on the argument that the Jewish state's de facto status as a nuclear-weapon state posed a dual threat to regional security. For one thing, the officials of the Islamic Republic maintained, Israel's nuclear armaments constituted a highly dangerous

element in the already inflammable conflict constellations of the Middle East. For another thing, the Iranians added, Israel's nuclear weapons constituted an independent threat to the regional countries.

According to Iranian officials – who also expressed their concern over the possibility of Israel using its nuclear weapons as a tool for political blackmail and over the damages caused to human health and the natural environment by Israel's nuclear activities – acted as a major obstacle to arms control and disarmament in the Middle East. Because of Israel's nuclear weapon arsenal, the Iranians claimed, the governments of the region had been forced to launch military build-up programs – both in the area of conventional armaments and WMD – which, in turn, had plunged the Middle East into a cycle of arms racing. The Islamic Republic strongly criticized Western powers and the United States, in particular, for their acceptance of Israel's nuclear status and held them responsible for the region's poor security situation.

Thus, Iran was highly critical of the extra-regional diplomatic initiatives made in the aftermath of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict to control WMD in the Middle East, for it viewed them as one-sidedly benefiting the Jewish state. For example, the Islamic Republic rejected the so-called Bush initiative of 1991 which, among others, called for the creation of a ban on the production in, and the importation into, the region of weapons-usable nuclear material and which effectively left Israel's existing fissile material stocks out of the initiative's purview. In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic rejected the ACRS talks that formed a part of the Middle East peace negotiations. Iranian officials argued that as long as all the regional countries had not acceded to multilateral arms control instruments banning WMD, and as long as the security concerns of one or more Middle Eastern countries continued to be ignored, the ACRS talks remained meaningless.

Yet, at the same time, Iran, which was not invited to take part in the ACRS discussions in the first place, took the opportunity to criticize Israel for the arms control stances it adopted at the talks. Above all, the Islamic Republic rejected the Israeli position according to which arms control measures in the Middle East would be possible only after a comprehensive peace in the region had been achieved. In the Iranian view, Israel's position was "irrational" because it was Israel's nuclear arsenal and the Jewish state's refusal to join the NPT that stood in the way of a comprehensive peace settlement in the region. Accordingly, Iranian authorities, for whom the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East was a prerequisite for a political solution to the Arab-

Israeli conflict, called on the major powers to cut their nuclear relations with Israel and to pressure the Jewish state to join the NPT and to subject its nuclear facilities to the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA.

While the Islamic Republic's attempts to *advance the establishment of a NWFZ or a WMDFZ in the Middle East* were tightly linked to its diplomatic efforts vis-à-vis Iraq and Israel, Iran's calls for the creation of such zones also acted as a diplomatically safe way for Iran to draw international attention to other Middle Eastern countries' WMD capabilities. In the Islamic Republic's WMDFZ argumentation, Israel's elimination of its nuclear weapons was defined as the necessary first step towards the creation of a Middle Eastern WMDFZ, followed by Arab governments' abandonment of their chemical and biological weapons capabilities. Iran called on the major powers to support Middle Eastern countries' NWFZ and WMDFZ efforts, to promise that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear armaments against the states comprising such zones, and to commit themselves to increased peaceful nuclear cooperation with the regional governments agreeing to relinquish their WMD capabilities.

The Islamic Republic also continued to *advocate the establishment of a NWFZ or a WMDFZ in the Persian Gulf sub-region*. As to the Iranian-envisioned NWFZ, the Islamic Republic called on the Gulf countries to begin regional cooperation in the area of nuclear arms control and, this way, pave the way for the creation of a NWFZ in the Persian Gulf. Iranian officials stressed that, as a start, all Gulf countries should declare their rejection of nuclear armaments and that the regional states which were not members of the NPT should promptly join the treaty. The Iranians also called on the Gulf states to exchange views on the NPT and IAEA safeguards. In addition to speaking of "coordinated regional implementation" of IAEA safeguards, they raised the idea of complementary verification arrangements agreed on by the Gulf states. Moreover, the officials of the Islamic Republic called for regional cooperation in peaceful uses nuclear energy and expressed their country's readiness to consider "any other positive initiative" dealing with nuclear matters in the Persian Gulf context.

However, in the post-Iran-Iraq war period, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation on a nuclear-free Gulf region began to increasingly center around the idea of a Gulf WMDFZ. And more often than not, Iran linked its calls for the establishment of such a zone with calls for the creation of a new, indigenous security arrangement in the region. Underscoring their country's willingness to see an indigenous Gulf security system in place, the representatives of the Islamic Republic

pointed to the fact that their country had made a proposal for the establishment of a collective security arrangement in the Gulf already in 1986. The Iranians argued that the implementation of the 1986 initiative would help the Gulf states to address the threat of WMD as well as the problem of foreign military presence in the region. By the same token, the officials of the Islamic Republic alluded to the concept of a "defensive security scheme," introduced by their government in 1994, and said that that concept, too, stressed the importance of a WMD-free Persian Gulf region.

Finally, Iran continued to *advocate the establishment of NWFZ and WMDFZ in other parts of the world* as well. Thus, for example, it restated its support for the NWFZ in the South Pacific and in the Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, and called for the creation of a similar zone in South Asia. In addition, the Islamic Republic welcomed South Africa's joining of the NPT in July 1991 and the subsequent agreement reached, in the form of the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba, on the formation of a NWFZ in Africa.

6.4.2.2 Objectives vs. goals

As was the case during the Islamic Republic's first decade, Iran's nuclear arms control operations in the post-Iran-Iraq war period served multiple foreign policy goals. Primarily, Iran's diplomatic operations aimed at addressing the Islamic Republic's security needs. Iranian officials' desire to reduce the threat, however distant, posed to their country by the nuclear capabilities of the major powers and Iran's regional neighbours was the central factor behind the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control objectives. Islamic Iran's diplomatic actions on the question of universal nuclear disarmament, and at a more concrete level, on security assurances, nuclear transparency, the fissile ban treaty, the CTBT, the improvement of the IAEA's verification system, the nuclear disarmament of Israel and Iraq, as well as on the establishment of NWFZ or WMDFZ in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf region, and in other parts of the world were strongly guided by security considerations.

Closely linked with such considerations were the Islamic Republic's attempts to use nuclear arms control diplomacy for influencing the power relations between Iran and the states striving for or already possessing nuclear weapons. Hence, the aforementioned Iranian diplomatic objectives can also be viewed as partially stemming from the Iranian concern that the Islamic Republic could be subjected to direct or indirect nuclear

blackmail in a future diplomatic or military confrontation with foreign powers.[32] Iranian leadership's diplomatic actions against Israel's nuclear weapons provide an excellent example of how the Islamic Republic tried to use nuclear arms control as an instrument to undermine the power and influence of an adversary and to internationally improve its own power position.

Of course, the Israel-related actions of the Iranians cannot be solely attributed to the Islamic Republic's security and power calculations. As a revolutionary regime whose domestic and – in some respects – international legitimacy largely depended on its adherence to an ideological foreign policy course, the Islamic Republic's Israel diplomacy included an ideological element as well. Apart from making use of international arms control arenas to condemn the Jewish state's and other international actors' possession of nuclear weapons on the grounds that such armaments functioned as symbols and tools of oppressive foreign and military policies, the authorities of the Islamic Republic kept pointing out that the mere existence of nuclear arms itself was spiritually and morally unacceptable. In a similar fashion, some of Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control objectives were illustrative of its prestige aspirations. Portraying itself as an opponent of the major powers' and regional states' nuclear weapons activities and as a defender of Third World countries' nuclear rights, the Islamic Republic hoped to win recognition, respect, and status both regionally and internationally.

Iranian officials' post-Iran-Iraq war diplomatic attempts to defend their country's right to a peaceful nuclear program and to improve the Islamic Republic's access to nuclear materials and technology, in turn, testified, first of all, to Iranian authorities' welfare-related considerations. Defining their nuclear activities as a factor contributing to future economic development and prosperity of their country and to the well-being of the Iranian people, the leaders of the Islamic Republic mobilized Iran's arms control diplomacy for the promotion of their welfare-related interests. Thus, while containing a prestige and an ideological element as well, Iran's diplomatic defence of Third World countries' nuclear rights partially stemmed from Iran's welfare aspirations. Similarly, Iran's calls for the creation of an international treaty banning armed attacks against nuclear facilities was indicative not only of the Islamic Republic's security interests but also of its welfare-related concern over the future of the Iranian nuclear program. The

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[32] Conversely, of course, Iran may have been worried that the possession of nuclear weapons by its adversaries could reduce the Islamic Republic's influence on those countries.

same can be said of the Iranian nuclear arms control operations – for example, in the context of the diplomatic debate on the strengthening of the IAEA's verification capabilities – which stressed that the arms control measures agreed on by the international community should not hamper or jeopardize NPT states parties' peaceful nuclear activities.

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic's diplomatic defence of its own and other developing countries' nuclear rights and activities – and, indeed, many other aspects of Iran's nuclear arms control policy as well – can also be interpreted as being part of an Iranian diplomatic effort to *cover and protect the Islamic Republic's attempts to develop a nuclear weapons capability*. As already discussed in chapter 5, during the Rafsanjani presidency, the leaders of the Islamic Republic continued to stress the importance of a civilian nuclear power program to their country and expanded their overt nuclear activities. And yet at the same time, as it later turned out, the Iranians also intensified their secret, undeclared nuclear experiments in the area of uranium conversion, uranium enrichment, and plutonium separation.[33] In short, the Islamic Republic was pursuing a national nuclear program with both civilian and military applications.

6.4.3 From the CTBT to the signing of the Additional Protocol

6.4.3.1 The objectives

The presidency of Muhammad Khatami, though introducing a new ideological language and a conciliatory tone to the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, did not bring about a significant substantive change in Iran's nuclear arms control operations. Under

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[33] Most significantly, during the Rafsanjani presidency, the Islamic Republic took a further step in improving its uranium enrichment capabilities. According to the officials of the Islamic Republic, in 1993, the international nuclear smuggling network led by Abdul Qadir Khan approached a company in their country with an offer to sell uranium enrichment technology. The offer was subsequently pursued by the AEOI which – between 1994 and 1996 – received 500 sets of P-1 centrifuge components from the network. Most of the items related to the 1993 offer had originally been ordered by Libya. The authorities of the Islamic Republic have also revealed that they received a full set of general P-2 centrifuge drawings from the Khan network in a meeting held in Dubai in 1996. Yet, according to the Iranians, no actual work on P-2 centrifuges – whose annual enrichment output is about two and half times higher than that of P-1 centrifuges – was carried out in their country prior to 2002. The Islamic Republic first acknowledged that it had received P-2 centrifuge drawings from foreign sources in January 2004. For statements made by Iranian officials during the Rafsanjani presidency implying that the Islamic Republic had an interest in nuclear weapons, note, for example, the remark made in 1991 by Ataullah Muhajirani, Iran's then vice-president for parliamentary affairs: "All Muslims must reach a high level [of expertise] in the nuclear realm, so they can face the Israeli nuclear challenge. The Muslims must act to obtain a nuclear capability

its reformist president, thus, Iran continued to use international arms control fora to voice its categorical opposition to nuclear weapons and to *promote the objective of universal nuclear disarmament*. Claiming that nuclear weapons and the military doctrines based on such armaments increased international insecurity and arguing that the elimination of nuclear weapons was the most important issue on the international arms control agenda, the Khatami administration called for the creation, at the CD, of a NWC, an international treaty that would ban nuclear armaments.

At the same time, however, the Iranians recognized that the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world could not be achieved in the near future. As a result, the Islamic Republic welcomed and kept calling for partial arms control measures, both in bilateral and multilateral contexts, to deal with the problem of nuclear weapons. In the first place, by referring to the 1925 Geneva Protocol as a model, the Khatami administration *advocated the adoption of an international ban on the use or threat of use of nuclear arms*. Iran also continued its efforts, made together with other non-nuclear states, to *achieve the establishment of an international instrument providing NNWS with negative security assurances* and kept *advancing the creation of international mechanisms that would increase nuclear transparency* and thereby disclose information about nuclear powers' weapons arsenals, fissile materials, nuclear delivery systems, plans to develop nuclear capabilities, and nuclear warhead dismantlement activities. In addition, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to *promote the establishment of an international fissile material treaty dealing with past and future production of fissile materials*.

As far as the issue of nuclear testing was concerned, in May 1998, the Islamic Republic was faced with the diplomatic challenge posed by India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests. The government of president Khatami – in spite of its initial ideological flirting with the idea of an Islamic bomb possessed by Pakistan[34] – responded to the developments in Iran's immediate neighbourhood by seeking to *convince the parties of the necessity of refraining from further tests* and by seeking to *prevent the escalation of the crisis in South Asia*. On the one hand, Iran pursued these objectives by expressing its

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that would strengthen them." (GOV/2004/83, 2004: 6, 10; GOV/2007/58, 2007: 4 and Feldman 1997: 137)

[34] As a sidenote, it is interesting to speculate to what extent Iran's initial supportive reaction to Pakistan's nuclear tests was influenced by the fact that the Islamic Republic's efforts to develop its uranium enrichment capabilities at the time were dependent on the help provided by the Abdul Qadir Khan network whose activities would hardly have been possible without the tacit approval of Pakistan's highest powerholders.

deep concern over the situation in the region and by noting that the test explosions had seriously undermined regional and international security as well as international arms control efforts, especially the CTBT. The Khatami government also noted that the nuclear tests in South Asia had been "a giant mistake" and that the two countries would have to face the diplomatic consequences of their actions.

Yet, at the same time, the Islamic Republic argued that instead of imposing heavy international sanctions on India and Pakistan, governments should help the parties to defuse the existing tensions in their relations. Acting on its own advice, Iran resorted to bilateral diplomacy and sent its foreign minister to visit both India and Pakistan to discuss the on-going crisis. In its talks with Indian and Pakistani authorities, the Islamic Republic called on the two countries to stop nuclear testing, to refrain from acts that could aggrevate the situation, and to launch a dialogue for solving the political and nuclear-related problems between them. Also, Iran called on India and Pakistan to implement bilateral confidence-building measures, to expeditiously accede to the NPT and the CTBT, and to make sure that no nuclear weapons-related materials, equipment, or technology would be transferred out from their respective territories.

The conciliatory side of Iran's diplomatic approach to the crisis in South Asia included the claim that NWS were partly responsible for the tensions in the region. According to Iranian officials, the nuclear powers' reluctance to take meaningful steps towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament, together with their general disregard for the interests of NNWS, had led India and Pakistan to conclude that they needed nuclear weapons to guarantee their national security. Iranian authorities also argued that the nuclear tests in South Asia had showed, for their part, that universal nuclear disarmament, in contrast to mere nuclear non-proliferation measures, was the only way to rid the world of the problem of nuclear weapons.

While arguing that the nuclear tests in South Asia had badly damaged the CTBT and seriously undermined the treaty's objective of blocking vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear armaments, the Islamic Republic continued, despite its repeated remarks that the CTBT contained major shortcomings, to *promote the early EIF and execution of the treaty*. Thus, the decision taken by the U.S. Senate in October 1999 not to ratify the treaty prompted a strong reaction from Tehran. Iranian authorities condemned the decision and argued that it could adversely affect the ratification processes in other countries. The Iranians also called on the international community to

express its concern over the Senate's rejection of the CTBT and to call on the Americans to reverse their decision.

Iran's criticism of the United States' stance on the CTBT intensified after the administration of president George W. Bush declared, in 2001, that it objected to the treaty and would not ask the Senate to reconsider approving the CTBT. Iran declared that the Bush administration's decision was an indication of the U.S. government's "dangerous mentality" and "unipolar vision of the world." A year later, after the Bush administration had released information about the latest U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, the Islamic Republic dismissed the document and argued that the new U.S. posture would strengthen the role of nuclear weapons and thereby also the role of nuclear testing in U.S. military planning.

Iran voiced its categorical opposition to any kind of development and qualitative improvement of nuclear arms – including the potential construction by the United States of so-called small or mini-nuclear weapons capable of penetrating earth and destroying military targets in hardened and deeply-buried bunkers – and while recognizing that, under the Bush administration, the United States would not alter its policy on nuclear testing, it nevertheless regularly called on the Americans to ratify the CTBT.

Of course, Iran's CTBT argumentation was overshadowed by the fact that the Islamic Republic itself had not ratified the treaty. Despite the declaration made by the Khatami administration in October 1999 that Iran would speed up the ratification process in the Majlis and submit its ratification instrument as soon as possible, the Islamic Republic never ratified the treaty. There were three main reasons for this: key countries had not acceded to the treaty, there was opposition to CTBT ratification within Iran's political elite, and the Iranians wanted, as long as they could, to retain the ratification issue as a trump card for future diplomatic bargaining.

One of the new features of Iran's arms control operations during the Khatami presidency was the Islamic Republic's active effort to diplomatically *support the advancement of its ballistic missile programs*. Following Iran's first flight test of the Shihab-3 missile in July 1998, Iran mobilized its arms control officials to convince the world that the Islamic Republic's missile activities served only defensive purposes and that they were not linked to any WMD, and especially nuclear weapons, ambitions. On the one hand, Iran's response to outside concerns over its missile intentions consisted of strong criticism of the countries – first and foremost Israel and the United States – openly accusing the Islamic Republic of WMD aspirations. Iranian authorities defined

such accusations as efforts to create tension between Iran and its neighbours and as attempts to generate a regional arms race that would serve the interests of extra-regional states.

For the most part, however, the Islamic Republic focused on reassuring the international community of the defensive and conventional nature of its missiles. Thus, the Khatami administration insisted that Iran would not use its missiles to threaten other states or to initiate acts of aggression against them. In addition, Iranian representatives declared that their government was committed to a policy of not using missiles first.[35] Simultaneously, however, the Islamic Republic stressed that it had every right to strengthen and improve its missile capabilities as part of its defence efforts and its conventional weapons programs.

Security motives aside, the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that their country's interest in missile technology stemmed from civilian considerations as well. Alluding to civilian applications of missile technology in areas such as space exploration, telecommunications, and broadcasting, the Iranians pointed out that their country's work on missiles with greater ranges and payloads than those of the Shihab-3 would serve purely non-military purposes. In early 2002, the Islamic Republic reportedly decided to stop the development of the Shihab-4 intermediate-range missile so that it could not be accused of constituting a missile threat to Europe and the United States. In November 2003, in the midst of the diplomatic crisis over its nuclear program, Iran officially declared that it would suspend the development of the Shihab-4. Yet the arms control value of this unilateral Iranian declaration was significantly undermined by the Islamic Republic's announcement that it would still continue the execution of the Shihab-3 program and that it would reserve itself the right to develop a space launch vehicle.

Iran's attempts to defend its missile activities included a diplomatic counterattack against the efforts of the MTCR to adopt strengthened international measures to control the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Using the UN as the key forum for its missile diplomacy, in October 1999, at the UN General Assembly's 54th session, the Islamic Republic introduced a draft resolution specifically dealing with the question of missiles. The Iranian draft resolution requested the secretary-general of the world organization to

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[35] Of course, as already noted above in section 5.3.2.1, the credibility of the unilateral Iranian declarations was greatly undermined by the Islamic Republic's missile attacks on the MKO based in neighbouring Iraq in April 2001.

prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects for the consideration of the General Assembly at its 56th session. As some governments wanted to have more time to consider the Islamic Republic's proposal, it was not until a year later that the Iranian initiative was accepted. In November 2000, the General Assembly asked the secretary-general to prepare a report on missiles for the assembly's consideration at its 57th session in 2002.

The Islamic Republic's multilateral missile diplomacy was guided by the premise that while there was an undeniable linkage between the issues of missiles and WMD, governments should also recognize that missiles constituted a legitimate element of states' national defence. Iranian officials emphasized that international arms control deliberations on missiles should always take individual countries' concerns and interests into account and that all decisions on international steps to control missiles should be collectively taken within the framework of the UN. Relatedly, the Iranians strongly denounced the missile-related export controls of the MTCR which they viewed as "narrowly-defined" and "discriminatory." In Iran's opinion, MTCR export controls were yet another outside attempt to hamper the Islamic Republic's and other developing countries' legitimate defence and development plans.

Consequently, Iran rejected the MTCR's diplomatic efforts to obtain support for its initiative on the adoption of an International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. To undermine the ICOC initiative, seen by the Iranians as an unwanted alternative to its UN-based missile approach, the Islamic Republic stressed the world organization's centrality in the missile debate and continued to pursue the matter at the UN. While refraining from joining the MTCR code of conduct, ultimately signed in The Hague in November 2002, Iran hailed the UN secretary-general's July 2002 report on the issue of missiles and, in October 2003, together with Egypt and Indonesia, requested the secretary-general to submit a follow-up report for the General Assembly by 2004. Also, the Islamic Republic called on the Geneva-based CD to start to deal with the question of missile control.

The fact that most Western countries withheld their support for the UN's missile studies was portrayed by Iranian officials as a sign of those states` intention to block the adoption of a truly multilateral approach to missile arms control. Yet, in the final analysis, Iran`s own diplomacy suggested that the Islamic Republic, heavily investing in missile programs, had little interest in far-reaching international missile control measures. That Iran's missile-related diplomatic statements made no references to

international steps limiting states' missile-related research and development activities testified to such disinterest. Untypically for the Islamic Republic, whose arms control diplomacy had always placed heavy emphasis on multilateral legal arrangements, it also argued that as far as international missile arms control measures were concerned, "it might not be necessary to automatically take the stereotypical path of negotiating a convention banning missile development and proliferation."

The Khatami government's attempts to use arms control diplomacy for defending Iran's ballistic missile programs may have also explained the reports, emerging in 1999, that the Islamic Republic had approached Israel that year through British intermediaries and proposed security talks between the two countries. Iran's diplomatic feeler to Israel – presumably intended for inducing the Jewish state to ease diplomatic pressure on the Islamic Republic and its weapons programs and for inhibiting preventive Israeli military strikes against Iran – had reportedly called for bilateral discussions on a declaration through which the countries of the Middle East would pledge not to use missiles for a first strike, on an agreement that would prevent the regional states from arming their missiles with WMD warheads, and on restrictions on missiles serving military purposes and having a range greater than 1,300 kilometers. Whatever the accuracy of the reports suggesting that the Islamic Republic had tried to open a secret discussion channel with Israel, the Khatami administration maintained that it had never made such a move and rejected the news reports claiming the opposite as products of the "Zionist propaganda machine."

Whereas, under president Khatami, the substance of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations remained highly identical with that of the Iranian policies of the Rafsanjani era, in the early 2000s, the diplomatic and military context of Iran's arms control policy changed dramatically. The foreign policy of the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush, especially after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the new information about Iran's nuclear program, revealed in 2002–2003, forced the Khatami administration to launch a major diplomatic campaign to *protect the Islamic Republic's ability to pursue a comprehensive nuclear program*. Arguably, the realization of this objective posed the biggest challenge ever to Islamic Iran's arms control policy.

The Islamic Republic's efforts to defend and protect its nuclear program consisted of diplomatic activities on two separate fronts. On the one hand, Iran's leaders launched a vehement diplomatic counterattack against the Bush administration in order to

undermine the credibility of the U.S. claim that Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the authorities of the Islamic Republic were forced to try to limit the damages caused to their nuclear activities by the 2002–2003 revelations about their nuclear program. The second diplomatic front mainly consisted of Iran's interaction with the IAEA.

As far as Iran's diplomacy vis-à-vis the United States was concerned, the officials of the Islamic Republic asserted that the Bush administration's opposition to Iran's peaceful nuclear program, together with the U.S. claim that Iran was interested in nuclear arms, stemmed from a number of considerations that had nothing to do with the nuclear issue itself but with the Bush government's foreign policy aspirations. First of all, the Iranians argued that the Bush administration used Iran and its nuclear program as a tool to fuel fear and tension in the Middle East so that it could, among others, increase its arms sales to the region. Secondly, Iranian representatives maintained that the United States' hostile policy against the Islamic Republic and its nuclear efforts was linked to an attempt to divert international attention away from Israel's nuclear arsenal and the threat it posed to regional and global security. Thirdly, the Iranians asserted that the Bush government's nuclear weapon accusations testified to an effort to pressure the Islamic Republic to change its policy on Israel and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Finally, the officials of the Islamic Republic concluded that the United States also aimed at weakening Iran by trying to keep it in a state of scientific and technological "deprivation" and that, in the end, the Bush government's ultimate objective was to overthrow Iran's Islamic regime.

According to the leaders of the Islamic Republic, the Bush administration had embarked upon a hegemonist, unilateral, and militarist foreign policy course that showed contempt for international law and the rights and interests of other nations. The Iranians maintained that the United States' dangerous and arrogant foreign policy manifested itself in a number of ways. Referring specifically to the Bush administration's arms control record, the representatives of the Islamic Republic noted that the Bush government had blocked the finalization of the BTWC protocol, prevented the fifth BTWC review conference from achieving results, and undermined the CWC and the activities of the OPCW.

Furthermore, the Iranians maintained that the United States' inaction in the area of nuclear arms control was similarly indicative of that country's disastrous policies. In the first place, the officials of the Islamic Republic criticized the Americans of letting

certain states to pursue nuclear armaments despite the international community's disapproval of such weapons. The Iranians alluded to Israel as the case in point. Iranian representatives accused the United States of allowing the Jewish state to develop nuclear bombs and delivery systems and of actively supporting the Israeli activities. The Iranians also asked why the United States did not call on India and Pakistan to give up their nuclear weapons. Apart from pointing to the double standard in the Bush government's nuclear arms control policy – of which the United States' active support for Iran's nuclear program during the Shah's era was referred to as a further piece of evidence – the officials of the Islamic Republic argued that the Bush administration had totally ignored the United States' obligation to reduce its nuclear weapons and to move towards complete nuclear disarmament. By the same token, the Iranians pointed to the Bush government's rejection of the CTBT and also claimed that the Americans had effectively terminated their bilateral nuclear arms control talks with Russia.

In Iran's view, the United States' intention to create a NMD system was yet another sign of the Bush administration's hegemonist aspirations. The authorities of the Islamic Republic viewed the United States' NMD plans as a severe threat to the ABM Treaty of 1972 which was characterized by the Iranians as the "cornerstone of global strategic stability." Eventually, Iran strongly condemned the Bush administration's decision, made public in December 2001, to withdraw from the treaty. In a similar manner, the Islamic Republic was highly critical of the Bush government's Nuclear Posture Review in which the United States reserved itself the right to resort to nuclear weapons in future conflicts and in which Iran was named as one of the seven potential targets against which the United States should be prepared to use nuclear arms. Finally, Iranian authorities repeatedly denounced the individual components of the so-called Bush doctrine which were officially codified into the U.S. National Security Strategy of September 2002.

But while actively objecting to the policies of the Bush administration and stressing the importance of existing international arms control arrangements, and while calling for the creation of a broad international front to stand against the U.S. policies and to defend the cause of multilateralism and law-based international relations, the authorities of the Islamic Republic also sought – out of their concern over the Bush administration's diplomatic and military intentions vis-à-vis Tehran – to discuss their country's nuclear program face-to-face with the Americans. Thus, in addition to welcoming U.S. companies to take part in the construction of Iran's nuclear facilities,

the Iranians mandated the IAEA director-general to inform, in October 2002, president Bush of the Islamic Republic's interest in opening a direct discussion channel with the U.S. government.

More importantly, in May 2003, Iran made a remarkable offer for a comprehensive political agreement between the Islamic Republic and the United States, which had only recently invaded Iraq. In its proposal, Iran offered to open up its nuclear activities to instrusive international inspections, to sign the IAEA additional protocol, and raised the possibility of extensive U.S. involvement in the Islamic Republic's nuclear projects. Moreover, in its May 2003 offer, Iran agreed to address U.S. concerns over terrorism, to coordinate policy on Iraq, as well as to consider the formal acceptance of a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In return, the Iranians called on the United States to lift sanctions against their country, recognize Iran's right to full access to nuclear, chemical, and biological materials and technology, recognize the Islamic Republic's security interests, and abandon the stated objective of a regime change in Iran. In the end, both Iranian initiatives were rejected by the Bush government.

As for the Islamic Republic's diplomacy with the IAEA – which, from the summer of 2002 onwards, sought to unravel the details of the Iranian nuclear program in order to determine whether the Islamic Republic had breached its safeguards obligations, whether Iran's nuclear program was exclusively for peaceful purposes, and whether there were secret nuclear activities taking place in that country – it consisted of two main features. On the one hand, in order to alleviate international concerns over its nuclear program and to avert international countermeasures that could hamper the execution of its nuclear projects – and, in the worst case scenario, lead to military action against Iran – the Islamic Republic had no choice but to cooperate with the IAEA, acquiesce to a rigorous investigation of its nuclear program, and make diplomatic concessions to the major powers, the key members of the IAEA's Board of Governors.

Yet, on the other hand, Iran's attempts to defend and protect its nuclear activities also contained a confrontational aspect, for Iranian authorities were not prepared to relinquish what they viewed as their fundamental NPT-based right to pursue a comprehensive nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Neither did Iranian officials, in their dealings with the IAEA and the major powers, shun away from making threats, concealing facts, presenting outright lies, making counterdemands, and resorting to diplomatic procrastination. Often by means of the aforementioned methods, Iranian representatives also tried their best to drive a diplomatic wedge between the

governments that took a hard approach to the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and the ones showing understanding to Iran's nuclear aspirations.

All in all, then, the cooperative and confrontational aspects of Iran's nuclear diplomacy lived side by side in the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations of 2002–2003. The cooperative element manifested itself, first of all, in the fact that after the August 2002 revelation about Iran's secret nuclear activities at two sites previously unknown to the IAEA, the Islamic Republic admitted, in September 2002, that it was indeed involved in building a heavy water production plant in Arak and a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz. In addition, Iran agreed to the IAEA's request to visit the two sites later that year, even if, due to Iran's procrastination, the visit did not materialize until February 2003.

During the IAEA's February 2003 visit to Iran, the authorities of the Islamic Republic expressed their readiness to cooperate with the agency and welcomed international supervision "to dispel the lies being fabricated against Iran." Similarly, the Islamic Republic emphasized its commitment to nuclear transparency, agreed to incorporate subsidiary arrangements into its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, and pledged to "actively consider" the signing of the IAEA additional protocol. Simultaneously, however, Iranian authorities pointed out to the agency's delegates that they were committed to developing the entire range of nuclear fuel-cycle facilities for their country and that it was their irrevocable right to do so. Moreover, the Iranians maintained that the agency had a responsibility to help their country to obtain civil nuclear assistance and noted that their cooperation with the IAEA ought to be concretely rewarded.

Referring to its policy of transparency, the Islamic Republic subsequently provided the IAEA with information about its nuclear fuel-cycle plans and allowed the agency to visit the Natanz uranium enrichment facility. In this connection, the Iranians also tried to deceive the IAEA by untruthfully maintaining that the design and development work on their centrifuge enrichment program had started in 1997 – the Iranians later admitted that the program had already begun in 1985 – and by asserting that Iran's testing of individual centrifuges and its development of an optimized centrifuge design had exclusively relied on modelling and simulation and not on the enrichment of small amounts of uranium as normally is the case. Indeed, the authorities of the Islamic Republic claimed that their country had so far never enriched uranium. Unconvinced of the explanation, the IAEA eventually successfully persuaded the Iranians to allow

environmental sampling at the Natanz pilot enrichment plant. As a result, in June 2003, the IAEA was able to confirm the discovery of particles of HEU at Natanz.[36]

Another untruth told by Iranian officials during the IAEA's February 2003 Iran visit concerned the Kalaye Electric Company that was believed by the IAEA to be linked to Iran's gas centrifuge enrichment activities. Iran responded to the agency's questions about the facility by stating that it was a watch factory that had also been used to produce centrifuge components, but that no uranium had ever been enriched at the site. Of course, as the authorities of the Islamic Republic themselves later acknowledged, between 1997–2002, the Kalaye facility had acted as the main venue for Iran's uranium enrichment efforts, the activities at the site having included the assembly of centrifuges and, more importantly, the testing of centrifuges with uranium hexafluoride in 1999 and 2002.

In February 2003, the IAEA also asked Iran's permission to visit the Kalaye facility and to take environmental samples there, but both requests were rejected by the Islamic Republic on grounds of the fact that Iran had not acceded to the IAEA additional protocol and therefore was under no obligation to agree to the steps called for by the agency. One month later, however, the Iranians allowed the IAEA to visit limited parts of the Kalaye facility, although the agency was denied access to two of the facility's rooms because, as it later turned out, they had contained centrifuges and the Iranians had tried to clear out any evidence of uranium enrichment at the site. Ultimately, in May 2003, the IAEA got an access to the whole facility, but the Iranians continued to rule out the possibility of environmental sampling at the site. In August 2003, the authorities of the Islamic Republic changed their stance and showed green light to environmental sampling at Kalaye, although by that time, they had significantly modified the workshop's premises. The Iranians rejected the accusation that they had deliberately sanitized the workshop rooms and maintained that the modifications had been made to transform the workshop from a storage facility into a laboratory. Because of the modifications conducted at Kalaye, the IAEA made it known that it might not be able to guarantee the accuracy of the samples taken there.[37]

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[36] The IAEA subsequently concluded that "it seems plausible" that, as claimed by the Iranians, the HEU contamination found at Natanz had not resulted from uranium enrichment at the site but from contaminated centrifuge components (GOV/2004/83, 2004: 10).

[37] On 16 September 2003, the IAEA informed Iranian authorities that it had found particles of HEU and low-enriched uranium from the samples taken at the Kalaye site. The Iranians responded by saying that as they had never enriched uranium to the level of HEU, the only possible explanation for the finding was

The Islamic Republic practiced diplomatic deception also when it came to the undeclared batch of natural uranium that Iran had obtained from China in 1991. While disclosing the transaction to the IAEA in February 2003 only after Chinese authorities had first confirmed the shipment to the agency, Iran's officials untruthfully asserted that they had not processed any of the uranium hexafluoride imported from the Chinese and specifically stressed that the compound had not been used in any enrichment, centrifuge, or other tests. But as eventually admitted by the Iranians in October 2003, the uranium hexafluoride used in the centrifuge tests carried out at the Kalaye Electric Company in 1999 and 2002 had indeed been among the nuclear materials imported from China in 1991.

Neither did the Iranian claim made to the IAEA in February 2003 that the Islamic Republic had designed the almost finished uranium conversion facility in Isfahan – whose existence had been declared to the IAEA in 2000 – without having operated any laboratory or pilot facilities using nuclear material to test the most difficult conversion processes, including the production of uranium hexafluoride, hold water. After the IAEA's inquiries on the matter, Iranian officials admitted, in August 2003, that they had secretly conducted uranium tetrafluoride conversion experiments on a laboratory scale at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center in the early 1990s.

Moreover, the Iranian assertion that its substantial research and development program on lasers, whose existence was revealed by the Iranians to the IAEA in May 2003,[38] had not included any activities pertaining to uranium enrichment turned out likewise to be incorrect. Here again, Iranian authorities eventually acknowledged that, between 1991–2000, their country had pursued a laser enrichment program in the course of which it had used 30 kilograms of uranium metal that had not been previously declared to the nuclear agency.

Responding to the IAEA director-general's report of 6 June 2003 on the developments in the Iran case, the 35-member IAEA Board of Governors released its own statement on Iran on 19 June 2003. In that statement, the board expressed its concern over the Islamic Republic's failure to report nuclear materials, facilities, and

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that the HEU particles had ended up there on contaminated centrifuge equipment obtained from abroad. The IAEA eventually concluded that the Iranian explanation seemed credible (ibid.)

[38] In May 2003, Iran also informed the IAEA for the first time of its plan to construct a heavy water research reactor at Arak. Despite the Iranian assurances that the purpose of the Arak reactor would be to produce radioisotopes and to serve as a nuclear training facility, Iran's May 2003 declaration raised immediate concerns that the Islamic Republic might try to utilize the planned heavy water reactor for the production of plutonium for military purposes.

activities as required by its safeguards obligations. The board also called on Iran, among others, to rectify all the existing safeguards problems, to fully cooperate with the IAEA in the on-going inspections, not to introduce nuclear material into the pilot uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, and to "promptly and unconditionally conclude and implement an additional protocol to its Safeguards Agreement."

Prior to the Board of Governors' June 2003 meeting, Iran had called on the board members not to use the "language of force and threat" in their statement, arguing that such language would be futile and not contribute to the resolution of the matter. After the issuance of the board statement, in turn, the Islamic Republic declared the statement as a diplomatic victory for Iran and a defeat for the United States whose aim was to have the Iran dossier referred to the UN Security Council which could authorize sanctions against the Islamic Republic. Iran also expressed its gratitude to the members of the NAM for their solidarity and constructive deliberations at the IAEA, as well as for their diplomatic support for the Islamic Republic.

Iran's determination to continue its nuclear program in spite of the diplomatic arm wrestling with the IAEA and the major powers manifested itself in the fact that, on 25 June 2003, only six days after the IAEA board's Iran statement, the Iranians began, against the IAEA board's express wish, to test centrifuges by feeding uranium hexaflouride into a single machine at the Natanz pilot plant. Later, on 19 August 2003, the Islamic Republic started the testing of a small ten-machine cascade with uranium hexafluoride. Yet, at the same time, in August 2003, the Iranians revealed information about the history and the details of their enrichment program to the IAEA and also allowed, after earlier rejections, the agency to visit two sites in Iran that had been suspected of being locations for centrifuge and laser enrichment.

The first of the sites, Ramandih, turned out to be involved in agricultural studies unrelated to nuclear fuel-cycle activities. Also at the Lashkarabad site, though identified as a laser testing facility, the IAEA found no signs of uranium enrichment activities. In October 2003, however, the Islamic Republic revealed that as part of a laser enrichment program operated between 1991–2000, during which Iran had used 30 kilograms of uranium metal not previously declared to the IAEA, Lashkarabad had served as a site for enrichment experiments carried out between October 2002 and January 2003. The Iranians also stated that they had dismantled all equipment related to laser enrichment in May 2003.

Based on the IAEA director-general's Iran report of August 2003, in September 2003, the nuclear agency's Board of Governors issued a resolution in which it, among others, expressed its grave concern over the fact that more than one year after the IAEA's initial inquiries to the Islamic Republic about undeclared nuclear activities, the agency was still not able to conclude that all nuclear materials in Iran had been declared and submitted to IAEA safeguards and that there were no undeclared nuclear activities in that country. Also, though acknowledging Iran's decision, made public on 24 August 2003, to start negotiations with the IAEA on the conclusion of the additional protocol, the board noted that the Iranian decision had not met the board's June 2003 request that Iran would promptly and unconditionally sign and implement the protocol. In addition, the board called on the Islamic Republic not to introduce nuclear material into Natanz, to suspend all further activities related to uranium enrichment, and to suspend all activities related to the production of separated plutonium until the unconcluded matters pertaining to Iran's nuclear program had been resolved and until the Islamic Republic had applied the provisions of the additional protocol in a satisfactory manner.

Even more damagingly for the Islamic Republic, the IAEA board also set a deadline for Iran in which it called on the Iranians to remedy all the failures related to the implementation of their safeguards agreement and to intensify their cooperation with the IAEA, among others, by supplying the agency with a full declaration of all imported materials and components relevant to the Iranian centrifuge enrichment program by the end of October 2003. Although the IAEA board's September 2003 resolution did not elaborate on the consequences to Iran of possible non-compliance with the resolution, the chance that the Iran file would be sent to the UN Security Council acted as a major diplomatic deterrent to the Islamic Republic.

Although Iranian authorities strongly rejected the IAEA board's resolution and even threatened to scale back the Islamic Republic's cooperation with the agency and to consider withdrawing from the NPT, the Iranians – concerned over diplomatic, economic, and even military sanctions against their country – eventually agreed to intensify their cooperation with the IAEA and to promptly provide the agency with information and clarifications on all outstanding questions pertaining to the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. On 16 October 2003, the secretary of Iran's SNSC informed the IAEA's director-general in Tehran that his country was prepared to hand over a full disclosure of Iran's present and past nuclear activities to the nuclear agency. Also, Iran made it known that it was now ready to conclude the IAEA additional

protocol, and pending that document's entry into force, act in accordance with the protocol and a policy of full nuclear transparency.

Shortly thereafter, on 21 October 2003, Iran and the EU trio of Britain, France, and Germany agreed on the so-called Tehran declaration which outlined a diplomatic plan for the parties to mitigate the international crisis over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. In that document, Iran – which viewed its cooperation with the EU states as a means to prevent the UN Security Council's involvement in the nuclear matter – restated the diplomatic pledges already made to the IAEA director-general, in addition to which Iran's authorities agreed to voluntarily "suspend all uranium enrichment and processing activities as defined by the IAEA." In exchange, the EU powers recognized the Islamic Republic's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, promised to block Iran's referral to the UN Security Council at the IAEA board's November 2003 meeting, and stated, among others, that once international concerns over Iran's nuclear activities would be fully resolved, "Iran could expect easier access to modern technology and supplies in a range of areas."[39]

Following the Tehran Declaration, on 23 October 2003, the Islamic Republic provided the IAEA with a documented declaration of its nuclear program which, Iranian officials assured, presented a comprehensive and accurate picture of Iran's past and on-going nuclear activities. In essence, the Iranian declaration revealed that the Islamic Republic had secretly been developing a uranium centrifuge enrichment program for 18 years and a laser enrichment program for 12 years and that the Islamic Republic had also succeeded in clandestinely enriching uranium and separating plutonium.[40] Then, on 10 November 2003, Iran's IAEA representative provided the agency with a letter in which the Islamic Republic expressed its acceptance of the additional protocol – Iran ultimately signed the document on 18 December 2003. On 10 November 2003, the Islamic Republic also informed the IAEA of its decision to immediately suspend all

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[39] As disucssed above in chapter 5, the EU trio had already approached Iran in early August 2003 with a letter in which the three powers had offered the Islamic Republic the prospect of technology sharing and cooperation in exchange for Iran's decision to stop its nuclear fuel enrichment efforts and to conclude the IAEA additional protocol. President Khatami had responded to the EU letter by stressing that his country would never divert its civilian nuclear program for military purposes and by noting that Iran had decided to enter immediate talks on the additional protocol. The supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, in turn, had given a more strict response to the EU powers' initiative by stating that outside calls on his country to give up nuclear technology were unsuitable, unjust, and oppressive, and that the Islamic Republic would never accept such requests.

[40] In its October 2003 declaration to the IAEA, the Islamic Republic admitted, among others, that it had extracted small quantities of plutonium in a hot cell at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center between 1988 and 1992.

Iranian activities related to uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. Specifically, Iran stated that it would suspend all activities at the Natanz site, refrain from producing feed material for enrichment processes, and not import any enrichment-related items.

Alarmed by the information in Iran's October 2003 declaration to the IAEA, on 26 November 2003, the agency's Board of Governors adopted a tough-worded resolution in which it strongly deplored the Islamic Republic's past failures and breaches of its obligation to comply with the provisions of its IAEA safeguards agreement. Specifically, the board expressed its grave concern over the fact that Iran had enriched uranium and separated plutonium in undeclared facilities. The board, which called on the Islamic Republic to strictly adhere to its safeguards obligations and to urgently take all necessary corrective measures to rectify its past actions and omissions, also called on the Iranians to pursue a policy of nuclear transparency and to fully cooperate with the IAEA so that the agency would be able to close the Iran file.

Moreover, the board warned the Islamic Republic that should further "serious Iranian failures" come to light, it would respond by immediately gathering to consider "all options at its disposal, in accordance with the IAEA Statute and Iran's safeguards agreement." The board thus implied that should the Islamic Republic seriously fail to implement its IAEA safeguards agreement, the Iran dossier would be sent to the UN Security Council. The authorities of the Islamic Republic – who, prior to the IAEA board's November 2003 meeting, had strongly called on Britain, France, and Germany not to include a reference to the Security Council in the board's resolution – dismissed the IAEA board's strong language but, at the end of the day, hailed the IAEA board's November 2003 meeting as a diplomatic victory for their country, for, contrary to the wishes of the United States – and a number of other countries, such as Japan and Canada – the Iran issue had not been placed on the Security Council's agenda.

In the course of 2002–2003, Iranian officials tried to defend and protect their country's nuclear program also by intensifying their diplomatic argumentation on why the Islamic Republic was not pursuing nuclear weapons and on the objectives of their nuclear program. According to the Iranians, their country was not interested in acquiring nuclear arms because the use of such weapons was against the teachings of Islam, because nuclear armaments were morally reprehensible, and because the Iranian people had concretely experienced the disastrous humanitarian consequences of WMD use.

Furthermore, the representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that the possession of nuclear weapons would undermine Iran's national security, in addition to which they

rejected the notion that nuclear armaments would increase the Islamic Republic's international status and influence. As evidence of their country's rejection of such arms, Iranian officials referred, among others, to the fact that the Islamic Republic was a member of all the major international arms control treaties dealing with WMD, to Iran's active diplomacy calling for regional and global nuclear disarmament, as well as to Iran's policy of not responding in kind to Iraq's chemical attacks during the 1980–1988 war.

As far as the motives of the Iranian nuclear program were concerned, the representatives of the Islamic Republic continued to maintain that their country's nuclear projects served the purpose of increased electricity production as well as the Iranian efforts to preserve the country's hydrocarbon reserves for export and processing industries, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to make use of the agricultural, medical, and industrial applications of nuclear science and technology. In addition, the Iranians expressed their belief that the know-how obtained in the nuclear field would have a positive spill-over effect and hence improve Iran's scientific and technological capabilities in other areas as well.

In 2002–2003, as part of the diplomatic defence of its nuclear program, Iranian representatives also revealed new information about their nuclear plans and emphasized that their country would under no circumstances give up its right to pursue a comprehensive nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Thus, after committing itself to the October 2003 Tehran Declaration, for example, the Islamic Republic stressed that its agreement to halt its uranium enrichment and processing activities constituted a temporary good-will gesture and that it strongly rejected the idea that Iran would have to permanently stop those nuclear activities.

The fact that the Islamic Republic tried to execute its nuclear plans despite being in the middle of an international crisis over its nuclear program was demonstrated not only by its nuclear cooperation talks with nuclear suppliers, above all with Russia, but also by Iranian arms control officials' continuous efforts to *improve their country's access to nuclear imports*. The Iranians complained that due to political considerations, nuclear supplier countries, such as the United States and Germany, had over the years seriously hampered Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and thereby driven their country to covertly develop an indigenous nuclear fuel production capability. According to the authorities of the Islamic Republic, the ever present risk of political discrimination also explained

why their country could not base its nuclear program on reliance on nuclear fuel produced abroad.

While inviting all technologically advanced member states of the IAEA to take part in their country's nuclear projects, Iranian officials strongly condemned the nuclear export controls targeted against Iran and called for their immediate removal. The Islamic Republic was of the opinion that international rules and guidelines dealing with nuclear export controls should be agreed on jointly by the nuclear supplier and recipient countries. Iranian authorities also stressed that the IAEA was the only competent and legitimate authority to verify the NPT states parties' compliance with their treaty obligations.

Consequently, the Iranians continued to express their support for the improvement of the IAEA's verification capabilities and noted that the acceptance of IAEA full-scope safeguards was the only legitimate criterion for determining whether a state was entitled to nuclear transfers. In the Iranian view, the developing countries that had joined the NPT should enjoy a preferential treatment in nuclear transfers and that such transfers to non-members of the NPT should be stopped altogether. Although the government of president Khatami had initially called on nuclear supplier countries to engage in a process of transparency, dialogue, and cooperation with countries seeking nuclear imports, as well as argued that the NPT member states acceding to the IAEA additional protocol should be granted a full access to nuclear transfers, by the time of the deepening of the nuclear crisis between Iran and the international community in 2003, the Khatami government no longer showed interest in step-by-step removal of extra-NPT export controls. For the Islamic Republic, immediate and full access to nuclear imports constituted a core discussion point in any diplomatic talks over its nuclear program.

Both before and during the crisis over Iran's nuclear activities, the Islamic Republic also continued to pursue its regional nuclear arms control objectives. Iran's arms control operations in this context built on the Islamic Republic's long-lived stances and simultaneously sought to respond to the dramatic changes that took place in Iran's security environment in the early 2000s. To begin with, following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the representatives of the Islamic Republic used international arms control fora to voice their government's views on the topical issue of WMD terrorism and to *advance the formulation of multilateral international measures against the threat of nuclear terrorism*. Although basically a topic of global relevance, the subject of

nuclear terrorism closely touched upon the Islamic Republic's regional interests, for in the international debate on the issue, the potential sources of nuclear terrorism were placed almost exclusively in the Middle East.[41]

Iranian officials fiercely maintained that the Islamic Republic had never supported terrorism in any part of the world nor harboured terrorists on Iranian soil. On the contrary, the Iranians stressed that their country itself had been a victim of terrorism and the use of WMD. Portraying themselves as defenders of Islam, the authorities of the Islamic Republic emphasized that Islam was a peaceful religion and that attempts to link international terrorism to Islam or individual Muslim countries were factually inaccurate and politically motivated. Finally, pointing out that the steps against WMD terrorism should take into account the root causes of terrorism and rely on an objective definition of the concept of terrorism, the Iranians argued that international measures against nuclear terrorism should be led by the IAEA[42] and that nuclear disarmament constituted the most effective means to prevent terrorists from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Iran also had to formulate its diplomatic position on the U.S. plan to launch a military operation against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In its diplomatic effort to *promote a UN-led international response to the question of Afghanistan*,[43] the officials of the Islamic Republic expressed their government's objection to a U.S.-led military campaign and claimed that the Bush government's real intention was to establish a U.S. political and economic hegemony in Central Asia.

Then, after the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan started on 7 October 2001, the Islamic Republic, trying to make the best out of the new situation in its immediate neighbourhood, quietly cooperated with the United States in the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom by agreeing to the use of its air space for rescue missions, by promising to help U.S. soldiers in distress on Iranian territory, and by expressing its

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[41] Of course, Iran actively participated in the international diplomatic debate on nuclear, and more broadly WMD, terrorism also because it was often mentioned especially by the U.S. government as one of states that could some day provide a nuclear weapon or another kind of a WMD to a terrorist organization. For this reason, the Islamic Republic's arms control operations pertaining to the topic of nuclear terrorism were also closely related to the defence of its nuclear activities.

[42] The Islamic Republic's emphasis on multilateralism was evident also in its argumentation on chemical and biological terrorism. Iran named the OPCW as the central international actor against chemical terrorism and noted that pending the creation of the planned treaty organization for the BTWC, the UN should lead international efforts against biological terrorism.

[43] Strictly speaking, this Iranian objective does not fall under the purview of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control diplomacy. Due to the linkage between the question of Afghanistan and terrorism, WMD terrorism included, however, it is referred to here, for the purposes of the present discussion, as an independent Iranian diplomatic objective.

readiness to take part in humanitarian activities. At the same time, however, the authorities of the Islamic Republic launched a diplomatic effort to *prevent long-term foreign military presence in Afghanistan.*[44]

Soon after the start of international military action in Afghanistan, Iran also had to start to take into consideration the possibility that the United States might launch a military attack against Iraq as well. Prior to the eventual start, in March 2003, of the war in another country bordering Iran, the Islamic Republic had attempted to contribute to *the defusing of the Iraq arms inspection crisis through peaceful means and under the umbrella of the UN*. Iranian officials had strongly objected to the use of military force against Iraq and argued that a unilateral military campaign by the United States would gravely undermine international law, multilateral WMD arms control efforts, and the security of the Middle East. On the other hand, the Iranians repeatedly called on the government of Saddam Hussein to fully comply with UN demands and to allow international arms inspectors to finish their work in Iraq.

After the beginning of the Iraq war, the officials of the Islamic Republic condemned the war as illegal and declared that it would stay impartial in the conflict and not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. Worried about the war's consequences, and especially about the possibility that the United States might extend the military campaign in Iraq against their own country and its Islamic regime, Iranian authorities quickly adopted *the ending of U.S. military presence in Iraq* as a key Iranian foreign policy objective that was actively pursued also by the Islamic Republic's arms control officials.[45] This was the case especially after it had started to become clear that the pre-war international worries about Saddam Hussein's WMD capabilities had largely been needless.

The military events in Afghanistan and Iraq aside, during the Khatami presidency, the Islamic Republic also continued to pursue its long-standing objectives of *advancing the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons and other WMD in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and in other regions of the world.* As before, Iranian officials claimed that Israel's nuclear arsenal acted as a major source of instability in the Middle East and as the main obstacle to the creation of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other

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[44] Neither does this Iranian objective directly fall under the purview of Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations. Due to the fact that Iranian officials often claimed that the U.S. military forces stationed in Iran's neighbourhood were armed with WMD, however, the prevention of foreign military presence in post-October 2001 Afghanistan is mentioned here as an independent Iranian objective.

[45] In the final analysis, the ending of the post-March 2003 U.S. military presence in Iraq did not constitute a specific objective of Iran's nuclear arms control diplomacy. However, given that Iranian authorities

WMD in the region. The representatives of the Islamic Republic stressed that the idea of WMD-free Middle East was an independent initiative that should not be coupled with developments on the Israeli–Palestinian front or with any other precondition.

While Iran called – among others, in the meetings of the members of the NPT, NAM, and OIC, as well as in bilateral talks with foreign states, such as Russia and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms – on governments to refrain from nuclear transfers to Israel and to pressure the Jewish state to give up its nuclear weapons by joining the NPT and accepting the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA, the Israel-related arms control diplomacy of the Islamic Republic – which continued to pursue the specific objective of *the Jewish state's nuclear disarmament* – included a vehement rejection of the Israeli accusation that the Islamic Republic was trying to acquire nuclear weapons. According to Iranian authorities, the purpose of the untruthful Israeli assertion was to divert international attention from the Jewish state's own WMD armament activities, its "militaristic policies," and its "state terrorism."

In 2003, after Iran's nuclear program had turned into a major international issue, the verbal attacks between the Islamic Republic and Israel only intensified. Fearing that Israel's authorities – who declared that Iran's nuclear program posed the biggest threat to the Jewish state's existence since its establishment in 1948 – would rely on military action in order to stop the Iranian program, the representatives of the Islamic Republic warned Israel of the consequences of possible military action against their country. Moreover, the Iranians claimed that it was the Jewish state and the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States that had ultimately been responsible for the diplomatic mobilization of the IAEA and the international community against Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

6.4.3.2 Objectives vs. goals

All in all, then, under president Khatami, security continued to constitute the main foreign policy goal steering Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations. The concern over potential – deliberate or unintentional – use of nuclear weapons against their country led Iranian officials to promote the objective of universal nuclear disarmament, to advocate the adoption of an international ban on the use or threat of use of nuclear arms, to call for the establishment of an international instrument providing NNWS with

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often maintained that the U.S. military forces operating in Iran's neighbourhood were armed with WMD, it, too, is referred to here, for the purposes of the present discussion, as an independent Iranian objective.

NSA, and to demand the creation of international mechanisms increasing nuclear transparency.

In the same vein, security considerations explained the Khatami government's diplomatic support for the establishment of an international fissile ban treaty controlling both the past and future production of those materials, as well as Iran's attempts to promote the early EIF and execution of the CTBT, the formulation of multilateral international measures against the threat of nuclear terrorism,[46] and the solving of the post-1998 Iraq arms inspection problem through peaceful means and under the umbrella of the UN.

The goal of security played a major role also in Iranian nuclear arms control operations that were intended for addressing the Islamic Republic's regional concerns and aspirations. As a consequence, the Khatami government's diplomatic attempts to defuse the 1998 nuclear test crisis in South Asia, to promote a UN-led international response to the question of Afghanistan in 2001, and subsequently to prevent long-term foreign military presence in that country, were all indicative of Islamic Iran's security calculations. Furthermore, Iranian authorities sought to protect the Islamic Republic's security interests by calling for the ending of the post-March 2003 military presence of the United States in Iraq, by advancing the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons and other WMD in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf sub-region, and in other regions of the world, and by underscoring the need for Israel's nuclear disarmament.

Iran's diplomatic defence of its ballistic missile programs also primarily stemmed from security calculations. Viewing its missiles as a necessary component of its conventional weapons arsenal, and probably also as a key element of its WMD programs, Iranian authorities resorted to arms control diplomacy in order to defend their right to build missiles – and thereby strengthen their national security – and in order to draw international attention away from Iran's activities in that field.[47] And if one concludes that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program had not only a civilian welfare dimension but a military dimension as well, then Iran's efforts to protect its ability to

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[46] When it came to the issue of nuclear terrorism, Iran's security interests in the matter were twofold. On the one hand, the authorities of the Islamic Republic recognized the possibility that Iran might be targeted by a terrorist organization equipped with a nuclear weapon. On the other hand, given that Iran itself was often mentioned as a country supporting terrorism, the leaders of the Islamic Republic tried to ensure that the international debate on terrorism would not result in diplomatic or, more importantly, military action against their own country.

[47] By extension, if one concludes that the Islamic Republic's missile programs were additionally driven by an effort to increase Iran's clout and status internationally, then the Islamic Republic's defence of its

pursue a comprehensive nuclear program by means of arms control diplomacy, too, were partially – probably even primarily – a product of Iranian security calculations.[48]

Indeed, the information revealed in 2002–2003 about the content of Iran's nuclear program supports the conclusion that, during the Khatami presidency, one of the objectives of the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations was to specifically *cover and protect Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapons capability*. It is not clear whether the Islamic Republic had by then already decided to actually build a nuclear weapon, but what seems indisputable is that the Iranians were at least pursuing a nuclear weapons option under the cover of their civilian nuclear program.[49] What the Iranians were likely striving for was to create a nuclear infrastructure that could be quickly, in the matter of weeks or months, geared, for whatever reason, to producing nuclear weapons.[50]

Of course, Iranian authorities fiercely rejected the claim that their nuclear program had a military dimension and stressed that their nuclear activities served only peaceful purposes. Be that as it may, the civilian aspects of the Iranian nuclear program suggested that the Islamic Republic's diplomatic defence of its nuclear program was partially also aimed at protecting the advancement of the welfare objectives set for the Iranian nuclear projects. The same motive was also strongly behind the specific Iranian diplomatic objective of improving the Islamic Republic's access to nuclear imports.[51]

There were also other Iranian nuclear arms control objectives that were partially driven by other than security-related foreign policy goals. Given that the officials of the Islamic Republic, despite their occasional claims to the contrary, viewed nuclear weapons as a source of national power and prestige, Iran's calls for universal and

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missile activities through arms control diplomacy also partially stemmed from an attempt to protect the promotion of the foreign policy goals of prestige and power.

[48] If the Islamic Republic's nuclear program is viewed as being additionally driven by an effort to increase Iran's international clout and status, then the Islamic Republic's defence of its nuclear program through arms control diplomacy also partially stemmed from an attempt to protect the promotion of the foreign policy goals of prestige and power. The same line of reasoning can also be applied to Iranian diplomatic attempts to improve the Islamic Republic's access to nuclear imports – an objective which can also be stronly linked to the security-driven Iranian effort to develop a national nuclear weapons capability.

[49] By the end of 2003, it became clear that the Islamic Republic had a long history of past IAEA safeguards violations. These violations, already discussed above in the present study, cemented a consensus among observers that Iran was at least seeking a nuclear weapons option.

[50] Generally, a state that manages to produce fissile material for weapons use is also believed to be capable of mastering the technical challenges pertaining to the manufacturing of an actual nuclear bomb.

[51] The presumed military motive notwithstanding, this Iranian objective included an ideological element as well, for from the Islamic Republic's point of view, outside attempts to control Iran's and other developing countries' access to nuclear materials, technology, and know-how were manifestations of the prevailing injustice in international relations.

regional nuclear disarmament and its support for, and advocacy of, various partial nuclear arms control measures were linked to the Islamic Republic`s prestige and power calculations.

Thus, on the one hand, the Iranians believed that an active nuclear arms control diplomacy would bring their country recognition and status especially among other developing countries. On the other hand, and more importantly, the Islamic Republic attempted to improve its power and influence vis-à-vis other states and particularly its adversaries through international steps that would affect those countries' military capabilities and behaviour.[52] And as before, Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations also included an ideological element, for under president Khatami, even if in a modified and more moderate form, Iran continued to define itself as a revolutionary state opposed to existing circumstances in international relations. To the authorities of the Islamic Republic, the division of the international system into states equipped with nuclear weapons – armaments that were defined by the Iranians as ideologically unacceptable in their own right – and non-nuclear countries was a symptom of the unjust conditions in inter-state relations.

6.5 Stability and Change in Islamic Iran's Arms Control Policy

6.5.1 Conventional arms control

A discussion of stability and change in Iran's arms control operations needs to start from the recognition that the Islamic Republic's arms control policy, like that of any other country, consists of actions that are indicative of long-term national policies and of actions that concern issues or events that are – or, in retrospect, turn out to be – of temporary interest. While Iran's responses to such short-term issues or developments can reveal patterns of continuity or change in its general arms control behaviour, an analysis of stability and change in Iran`s operations in the four individual areas of arms control between the 1979–2003 period obviously necessitates a certain permanence in

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[52] Note here, for example, the Khatami administration's objective of preventing long-term foreign military presence in Afghanistan after the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Islamic Republic's efforts to contribute to the solving of the Iraq arms inspection crisis through peaceful means and under the UN umbrella, Iran's diplomatic actions against the post-March 2003 military presence of the United States in Iraq, the Islamic Republic`s interest in the creation of NWFZ in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and in other regions of the world, as well as Iran's categorical objection to Israel's nuclear weapons.

the questions and phenomena that have invited or forced the Islamic Republic to launch arms control operations in the first place.

When it comes to the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations, there were a number of Iranian policy objectives that were formulated to address specific situations or circumstances originating either from the domestic Iranian political arena or from Iran's international environment. First of all, thus, the leaders of the Islamic Republic, as part of the steps taken to alter Iran's foreign policy orientation in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, resorted to arms control in order to distance the new Iranian regime from the policies of the Pahlavi era, to introduce the fundaments and priorities of post-revolutionary Iran's foreign and security policies to the world, and to protect the country's Islamic system from perceived outside threats.

Secondly, the 1980–1988 war between Iran and Iraq forced the Islamic Republic to resort to arms control as a means to defend its interests in the face of an unexpected external development. During the war, the objectives of Iran's conventional arms control operations mostly testified to the Islamic Republic's attempt to influence various aspects of Iraq's military behaviour and capabilities, as well as to Iran's effort to sustain and improve its military ability to realize the objectives it had set for itself in the war. And in the immediate aftermath of the costly conflict, the authorities of the Islamic Republic used arms control diplomacy as a means to persuade Iraq to agree to a final peace settlement satisfactory to the Iranian leadership.

In contrast to the Iranian objectives that were pursued with regard to more or less short-term issues and developments, the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations also tried to achieve objectives that remained constant during all the three periods of Iran's foreign policy discussed in the present study. Accordingly, there was a marked continuity in the Islamic Republic's use of international arms control fora as a venue to legitimize and defend its own military behaviour and armament policies. Similarly, Iran constantly resorted to arms control diplomacy for the purpose of challenging the existing power relations in international affairs as well as, relatedly, for the purpose of demanding controls to the major powers' military behaviour and armament policies.

In particular, the leaders of the Islamic Republic strongly disapproved the major powers' security cooperation with the Gulf Arab states and those powers' direct military presence in Iran's neighbourhood in the Persian Gulf. As a consequence, Iran's attempts to create and develop security collaboration with GCC states were often subordinated to

the pursuance of diplomatic objectives that pertained to Iran's relations with the major powers and especially with the United States. From this it followed that despite the Gulf arena's central role in the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations, post-Pahlavi Iran's efforts to foster security cooperation with the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms – especially after the Iran–Iraq war, during and in the immediate aftermath of the 1990 – 1991 Gulf conflict, and later during the Khatami presidency – failed to turn into permanent features of the Iranian operations of 1979–2003.[53]

The fact that many of the objectives of Iran's conventional arms control operations were formulated to address temporary Iranian needs would suggest that the content of Iran's conventional arms control argumentation correspondingly varied in terms of whether the issues or developments in question concerned short-term or long-lasting policy concerns. However, this was not the case, for there was a remarkable substantive continuity in Iran's argumentation. Irrespective of the nature of the conventional arms control-related issue at hand, the Iranians as a rule built their argumentation on the same substantive foundation.

The Islamic Republic's focus on the major powers was one of such persistent elements. From Khomeini to Khatami, the leaders of Islamic Iran – though softening the tone, but not the core message, of their political language along the way – declared the major powers responsible for global arms racing and for the lack of significant conventional arms control among states. In the Iranian analysis, it was the foreign, military, and armament policies of the major powers – aiming to promote those powers' objectives at the expense of other states' interests and especially those of the developing world – that explained the conflictual state of international relations and the build-up of conventional armaments and military technology all over the world.

The Islamic Republic's focus on the Persian Gulf region was another constant feature of its conventional arms control argumentation.[54] Naturally, the Iran–Iraq war and the

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[53] As far as substantive continuity in post-revolutionary Iran's conventional arms control operations was concerned, it should be further reminded here that during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies, Iran adopted an essentially unchanged policy towards the UN conventional arms register. As discussed in detail in chapter 3, under Rafsanjani and Khatami, the Islamic Republic also had to formulate a national approach to the issue of micro-disarmament, a question which Iranian authorities had little interest in but which they could not ignore because of the potential ramifications of international micro-disarmament measures on the Islamic Republic's arms industry and military activities. Although it was not until the presidency of Muhammad Khatami that the topic of micro-disarmament became a fixed part of Iran's conventional arms control diplomacy, it is highly unlikely that the Iranians will change their initial issue positions on the matter in the foreseeable future.

[54] It is striking that although the Islamic Republic viewed itself as a Middle Eastern power with interests in the region as a whole, its conventional arms control operations, contrary to the Islamic Republic's military activities, concentrated almost exclusively on the Persian Gulf sub-region or zone of conflict.

poor post-war relations between the two countries left a lasting mark not only on the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations but also on its arms control policy in general. There was also a marked continuity in Iran's characterizations of its own military, armament, and arms control policies. Portraying itself as a revolutionary state determined to challenge the major powers' dominance of the international system, the Islamic Republic continuously called for a fundamental change in world politics and viewed arms control as an important tool against the destructive policies of the major powers. The Iranians also stressed the importance of multilateralism in arms control diplomacy and called on Third World countries to act as a bloc that leads international arms control efforts.

Furthermore, while emphasizing the moral credentials of their own country's policies and its commitment to arms control, the leaders of the Islamic Republic strongly defended their right to use military power for Iran's defence and did not hesitate to deviate from their arms control prescriptions when that was needed to secure Tehran's interests. Thus, Iranian arms control officials made constant attempts to portray their government's military activities and armament policies as purely defensive measures that were necessitated by other states' actions and not by Iran's own military or power aspirations. Essentially, then, Iran tried to have it both ways: to influence other states' military behaviour and capabilities, while simultaneously protecting its own policies and capabilities from outside limitations – an effort which, of course, is far from untypical for other countries as well.

The Islamic Republic's need to continuously defend its military intentions and armament policies in multilateral arms control fora stemmed from both domestic and international reasons. On the one hand, given that Iran's leaders were reluctant to revise their policies, they sought to reduce the diplomatic and other international costs of their actions through arms control diplomacy. On the other hand, the Iranians resorted to arms control diplomacy in order to protect the freedom of action, as well as the capabilities, of their armed forces – both in times of peace and war – against perceived and real external threats.

The continuity in Iran's diplomatic opposition to the foreign, military, and armament policies of the major powers, in turn, was sustained, first of all, by ideological factors. Although the role of the ideological factor in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation and objective-setting diminished in the course of time, it never disappeared from Iran's arms control policy. More importantly, however, the continuity

in the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations vis-à-vis the major powers was primarily maintained by the unchanging conditions in Iran's international environment. Despite the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union – developments that, to some extent, took the edge out of the Iranian leaders' black-and-white worldview – the Islamic Republic continued to feel that its interests were directly threatened by the policies of the major powers and the United States, in particular.

Nowhere did external developments have such a great impact on Iran's conventional arms control operations than in the Persian Gulf. The Iran–Iraq war, the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, persistent uncertainty about Saddam Hussein's military plans, together with the close diplomatic and security cooperation that developed between Western powers – especially the United States – and the Gulf Arab sheikhdoms after the Gulf conflict, all testified to the chronic instability in the Islamic Republic's immediate neighbourhood and primarily explained why the Gulf played such a central role in the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control diplomacy.[55]

As far as the means of Islamic Iran's conventional arms control operations were concerned, they mainly consisted of multilateral diplomatic actions, but included bilateral diplomatic and unilateral arms control steps, too. The most significant unilateral measures taken by the Iranians were direct results of the regime change that occurred in Iran and emblematic of the Islamic Republic's determination to change the country's foreign policy orientation after the revolution. In fact, the only other unilateral conventional arms control step taken by the Islamic Republic during the period considered in this study occurred in November 1998, as Iran declared that it had imposed a moratorium on the export of APM.[56] However, it is not clear to what extent, if at all, the Iranians actually implemented the moratorium.

Diplomatic argumentation obviously constituted the main instrument of Iran's conventional arms control operations. Still, both in multilateral and bilateral contexts, the Islamic Republic also took part in formal arms control arrangements that were created to regulate the participants' military behaviour and armament policies. Thus, during the Iran–Iraq war – more accurately, in June 1984 – the warring parties agreed

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[55] In a similar manner, unchanging conditions in Iran's international environment explained the consistency in the Islamic Republic's policy towards the UN's conventional arms register. From the Iranian point of view, the register arrangement remained basically irrelevant because it failed to prevent destabilizing accumulations of conventional armaments in various parts of the world and because it did not cover WMD.

[56] Of course, the Islamic Republic's bitter acceptance, in the summer of 1988, of the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war can also be categorized as a unilateral arms control step.

on a UN-brokered moratorium on shelling and bombing of civilian areas. Later, in the post-war period, the Islamic Republic implemented, during the presidency of Rafsanjani and especially that of Khatami, limited CBM with GCC countries. In the course of the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies, Iran also hesitantly submitted national reports to the UN's conventional arms register, the only global conventional arms control arrangement the Iranians participated in.

While exhibiting a distinct trend of continuity in terms of content, objectives, and means, the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations were characterized by at least two features that clearly linked the Iranian operations to the self-correcting changes that were made to Iran's foreign policy orientation in the 1979–2003 period. The diminishing importance of ideological considerations in the Islamic Republic's objective-setting was the first feature. While playing a crucial guiding role in Iran's conventional arms control operations in the course of the Islamic Republic's first decade, after the Iran–Iraq war, the ideological factor was increasingly pushed into the background in the Iranian operations, as postulated by the so-called three-era thesis discussed in chapter 2.

And if the role of ideological considerations in Iran's conventional arms control objectives decreased as the post-Pahlavi Iranian regime matured, the same applied to the ideological element in Iran's diplomatic language. The trend of moderation and increased dissociation from the Khomeini era's ideological legacy was recognizable in Iran's conventional arms control argumentation as well. This trend – the second main feature that tied the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control policy to the shifts in post-Pahlavi Iran's foreign policy orientation – was not interrupted by the Khatami government's emphasis on ideology, for the ideological message of the reformist Iranian president, with its non-confrontational approach to international affairs, merely reinforced the processes of moderation and deradicalization that had started during the Rafsanjani presidency.

6.5.2 Chemical disarmament

In many ways, post-revolutionary Iran's chemical arms control diplomacy can be seen as the product of one phenomenon: Iraq's war-time use of chemical weapons against the Islamic Republic in the 1980s. The chemical issue not only dominated Iran's arms control policy in the course of the 1980–1988 war, but the Iraq experience also

strongly guided its post-war diplomacy in the area of chemical arms control. Overall, then, there was a significant continuity in terms of the objectives and the content of Iran's chemical arms control operations during the time period considered in this study.

Iran's attempts to diplomatically address the Iraqi chemical threat extended from the war years all the way to the Khatami presidency. The only period when the Islamic Republic was able to take a breathing spell with regard to its Arab neighbour was in the years after the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, as Iraq's chemical weapons capabilities were eliminated in accordance to the UN Security Council resolution 687 of April 1991. Even then, the Iraq question was indirectly present in Iran's diplomatic attempts to achieve a CWC that would rapidly lead to universal chemical disarmament and oblige the states parties to immediately respond to future cases of chemical warfare. Similarly, the Islamic Republic's specific interest in chemical arms control in the Middle Eastern context was, above all, a reflection of the war-time experience with Iraq's chemical warfare.

Another constant element in the objective-setting of post-Pahlavi Iran's chemical arms control operations was the emphasis that was placed on the Islamic Republic's own chemical activities. During the war years, Iranians leaders most probably used arms control diplomacy as an instrument to support their military preparations for possible retaliatory chemical warfare against Iraq. And after the war, they presumably considered the CWC, and specifically the provisions of article XI of that treaty, an avenue to obtain access to chemical imports that were crucial for their weapons program. Moreover, the arms control officials of the Islamic Republic continuously sought to discredit the – possibly accurate – claim that their country continued to possess chemical weapons. At the same time, however, post-war Iran, faced with the challenge of economic reconstruction, had a strong non-military interest in chemical imports, too. As a result, the representatives of the Islamic Republic saw their CWC-related arms control operations as a means to promote their country's peaceful chemical activities as well.

There was also a strong element of continuity in Iran's diplomatic objective-setting when it came to the Islamic Republic's approach to the issue of chemical arms control in the multilateral Middle Eastern context. Especially after the end of the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic steadily called – partly of course because of the Iraq factor but partly also because of other reasons – on Middle Eastern governments, including those

of the Persian Gulf, to take steps in the area of chemical arms control and, above all, to accede to the CWC.[57]

Not unexpectedly, the permanence in Iran's objective-setting translated into a marked continuity in the content of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation. The overarching theme in the Iranian argumentation was the call for universal chemical disarmament. Following the start of Iraq's chemical warfare, the officials of the Islamic Republic turned into vehement proponents of universal chemical disarmament, and both during the Iran–Iraq war and afterwards, repeatedly stressed the need for the creation of international instruments that would prevent the use of chemical armaments and oblige the international community to unconditionally come to the assistance of the victim states should such weapons nevertheless be used. These core Iranian demands were strongly present also in the Iranian approach to the individual provisions of the CWC.

States' right to pursue peaceful chemical activities without undue outside interference constituted the second persistent theme in Iran's chemical arms control argumentation. The subject of peaceful chemical activities was incorporated into the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy after the Iran–Iraq war and it strongly coloured Iranian statements during the CWC negotiations. The key demand of the Iranian representatives was that the implementation of the chemical treaty should in no way impede the states parties' peaceful chemical activities and, by extension, their economic and technological development. On the contrary, the Iranians pointed out, the CWC should reward the states parties by concretely contributing to those countries' peaceful chemical activities. Following the establishment of the CWC, issues related to article XI of the treaty, as already demonstrated above in chapter 4, began to occupy an increasingly prevalent role in Iran's chemical arms control operations.

Iran's diplomacy on chemical arms control in the Middle East was similarly characterized by argumentative consistency. While identifying Israel's WMD and especially its nuclear weapons as the main obstacle to chemical arms control in the region, and hence sympathizing with the Arab position which saw chemical and nuclear arms control as indivisibly interconnected, the Islamic Republic at no stage viewed those areas of arms control as inseparably intertwined. Quite the opposite, Iran's officials repeatedly spoke of chemical arms control as an autonomous area of diplomatic

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[57] The Iranian chemical arms control objectives, pursued by the Islamic Republic after the establishment of the CWC and already presented earlier in this chapter, which do not directly fit into the aspect of continuity discussed here can be seen as individual manifestations of Iran's specific attempt to secure its CWC-related interests.

activity. In the Gulf sub-region, too, Iran referred to chemical weapons as an independent problem and consistently called on the regional governments to take steps in chemical arms control, both individually and jointly.

As far as the means of the Islamic Republic's chemical arms control operations were concerned, during the war years, in their effort to persuade the international community to stop Iraq's chemical warfare, Iran's officials resorted first and foremost to diplomatic argumentation in various multilateral arms control fora. In addition, the Iranians publicized detailed information about the Iraqi attacks and their consequences and provided evidence of the Iraqi attacks to foreign goverments and other relevant international actors. Also, the Islamic Republic tried to keep the Iraq issue alive diplomatically by organizing international medical gatherings dealing with the problem of chemical weapons. Finally, from 1984 onwards, though initially rather unenthusiastically, Iran participated in the multilateral negotiations on the CWC at the Geneva-based CD.

After the war, the Islamic Republic continued its diplomatic argumentation against chemical armaments in international arms control fora and placed increased emphasis on the CWC talks. Following the eventual establishment of a formal international chemical disarmament treaty, Iran's chemical arms control diplomacy centered, at first, around the activities of the Preparatory Commission of the OPCW and later around the international agency itself. The process of the ratification of the chemical treaty in Iran was completed in November 1997 and included the formulation of a Majlis declaration in which the Islamic Republic listed the circumstances under which it would consider withdrawing from the CWC.

Then in November 1998, Iran submitted its initial declarations to the OPCW and revealed in this context that it had pursued chemical weapons during the Iran–Iraq war. Later, in connection with the OPCW's first inspection visit to Iran, the officials of the Islamic Republic took the unilateral step of destroying, far before the CWC-regulated deadline, the two chemical facilities in which Iran's war-time weapons program had reportedly taken place.

This summarization of the means of Iran's chemical arms control operations illustrates that the Iranians relied on a wide variety of instruments in their chemical arms control-related activities. The variety of the means used in post-Pahlavi Iran's chemical arms control operations was not only illustrative of the fact that the issue of chemical weapons played a very important role in the Islamic Republic's arms control policy at

large, but it also testified to the fact that chemical disarmament was one of the few areas of arms control where the post-Cold War international community managed to move forward and achieve significant results.

Moreover, the means used by the Iranians illustrated, for their part, that Iran's chemical arms control operations were by and large autonomous of the general features that characterized the Islamic Republic's foreign policy orientation during the three distinct periods identified by the proponents of the three-era thesis. In fact, Iraq's use of chemical armaments during the 1980–1988 war was one of the key factors that forced Iranian leaders to set in motion the process of moderating and deradicalizing their foreign policy. Iran's active diplomacy at the UN, its references to the importance of international law – and the Geneva Protocol of 1925, in particular – together with its participation in the CWC negotiations were concrete examples of the fact that already during the Islamic Republic's first decade, Iranian representatives operated within the same international legal and institutional frameworks that their rejected at the ideological level.

After the war, the Islamic Republic continued to actively pursue its chemical arms control objectives in multilateral diplomatic fora and in the context of the CWC talks. And as before, ideological objectives practically played no role in the Islamic Republic's chemical arms control operations. Instead, it was first and foremost the goal of security that guided the Iranian actions. In a similar manner, Iran's diplomatic language essentially continued to lack the ideological characteristics that were common to the Islamic Republic's foreign policy argumentation in many other contexts. In short, post-revolutionary Iran's chemical arms control operations developed an autonomous dynamic that was created and maintained by the Islamic Republic's experience with Iraq's chemical warfare, by the security threats in Iran's external environment, and by the domestic Iranian considerations that pertained to the Islamic Republic's military and peaceful chemical activities.

6.5.3 Biological disarmament

Post-revolutionary Iran's biological arms control operations started with an effort to maintain continuity in Iranian diplomacy in the face of the country's domestic turmoil and soon transformed into an instrument in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic campaign against Iraq's chemical warfare. Thus, it was the war which gave the real purpose for

Iran's biological arms control operations during the Islamic Republic's first decade. And following the 1980–1988 conflict, it was the experience of Iraq's chemical warfare that primarily guided the Islamic Republic's approach to biological arms control and especially to the multilateral talks on the strengthening of the BTWC.[58]

During the time period starting from the cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war and ending in the collapse of the AHG process in July 2001, the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations mostly centered around the BTWC and showed a marked continuity both in terms of the objectives of the Iranian operations and the content of Iran's diplomatic argumentation. As for the objectives, the officials of the Islamic Republic's focused, first of all, on supporting the establishment of a verification mechanism for the BTWC, on promoting a BTWC treaty amendment that would explicitly ban the use of biological weapons, and on working for the creation of a detailed BTWC-based assistance mechanism that would be activated in cases where a state party has become a victim of biological weapons use. Moreover, Iranian officials focused on advancing biological arms control in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf sub-region.

The second constant element in the Islamic Republic's objective-setting concerned Iran's own biological activities. On the one hand, Iranian officials sought to improve international implementation of article X of the BTWC in order to promote their country's peaceful biological activities. In addition, the Islamic Republic tried to ensure that the creation of a BTWC verification mechanism would not impede those activities. On the other hand, Iran's arms control diplomacy simultaneously aimed at proving wrong the claim that the Islamic Republic pursued biological armaments and possibly also at protecting and covering an Iranian biological weapons program.[59] Finally, Iran's diplomatic course was characterized by a constant effort to sustain the primacy of multilateralism in international deliberations on biological arms control.

As was the case with the Islamic Republic's chemical diplomacy, the content of Iran's biological arms control argumentation was characterized by a marked continuity. Given that the post-revolutionary Iranian regime inherited – and eventually decided to maintain – Iran's membership in the BTWC, the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations mostly revolved around the individual aspects of the biological treaty

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[58] In this sense, then, the development of post-revolutionary Iran's biological arms control diplomacy shows, to use Tibi's (1998: 9) observation, that the consequences of a war are often more important than the war itself.

and were not guided by an overarching argumentative theme. At the same time, however, there was a remarkable continuity in initial Iranian issue positions when it came both to post-Pahlavi Iran's global or BTWC-related arms control argumentation and to its views on biological arms control in the regional Middle Eastern context. This substantive consistency was essentially maintained by the static political and security conditions in Iran's international environment as well as by the unchanging domestic Iranian interests during the time period under consideration.

The fact that Iran's biological arms control operations more or less centered around the BTWC demonstrated that the means of the Iranian operations primarily consisted of formal multilateral diplomacy, that is, of diplomatic activities that focused on reviewing and improving an already existing legal instrument. The primacy of formal multilateral diplomacy alone implied that Iran's biological arms control operations, just like those in the area of chemical arms control, were largely unaffected by the macro-level changes that took place in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy orientation between 1979 and 2003.

Operating within the confines of a single international treaty dealing with a specific area of arms control, the Iranians involved in biological arms control were occupied with practical treaty-related issues and technicalities and thereby left the advancement of ideological aspirations to their other colleagues. Therefore, not only did ideological considerations play an almost non-existent role in the objective-setting and argumentation of Iran's biological arms control diplomacy, but because of the relative absence of ideological factors from the Iranian operations, it is also hard to identify a clear trend of moderation and deradicalization in the Iranian diplomacy over the years. In short, the Islamic Republic's biological arms control operations produced patterns of continuity that were peculiar to a narrow area of Iranian foreign policy and remained largely immune to the self-correcting changes that were made to post-Pahlavi Iran's foreign policy orientation.

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[59] It should be reminded here that Iran's militarily motivated diplomatic actions included the effort to use the BTWC's confidence-building mechanism as a means to obtain information about other states' biological capabilities.

6.5.4 Nuclear disarmament

Stability was also the hallmark of Iranian nuclear arms control operations. The objectives set for Iran's nuclear arms control diplomacy in the course of the Islamic Republic's first decade continued to heavily steer the Iranian operations during the rest of the 1979–2003 period. As a consequence, there were only about a dozen of Iranian objectives in those years that turned out to be of temporary interest to the Islamic Republic.

In the course of the Iran–Iraq war, there were three of such short-term Iranian objectives. The first of them consisted of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic attempt to draw international attention to South Africa's nuclear capabilities and to achieve their dismantlement. The second dealt with the Islamic Republic's effort to rally the international community to condemn and punish Israel for its air attack against Iraq's Osirak nuclear research reactor in June 1981. The third temporary war-time nuclear arms control objective was directly linked to the developments in the war, more accurately, to Iran's attempt to mobilize governments to stop Iraq's air raids against the Bushehr nuclear site.

In the post-war era, the Islamic Republic's temporary nuclear arms control objectives consisted, among others, of the Iranian effort to prevent the escalation of the May 1998 nuclear test crisis in South Asia, of Iran's attempt to support the advancement of its ballistic missiles programs by means of arms control diplomacy,[60] and of Iranian activities to promote the formulation of multilateral international measures against the threat of nuclear terrorism. Other temporary Iranian diplomatic objectives formulated during the Khatami presidency included the promotion, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, of a UN-led international response to the question of Afghanistan, the prevention of long-term foreign military presence in that country, and the ending of U.S. military presence in post-Saddam Iraq.[61]

Yet, at the end of the day, Iran's reactions to short-term developments in its external environment were exceptions to the remarkable continuity in its diplomatic objective-setting in the area of nuclear arms control. In the first place, throughout the 1979–2003

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[60] This objective is classified here among the temporary Iranian objectives because the Islamic Republic placed the issue of missiles on its arms control agenda as late as the end of the 1990s, that is, not long before 2003, this study's cut-off year for analysis.

period, the leaders of the Islamic Republic consistently sought to influence the major powers' nuclear weapons policies by diplomatic means. While declaring universal nuclear disarmament as the ultimate Iranian diplomatic objective, the Iranians also aimed, more modestly, at limiting the nuclear powers' ability to use or threaten to use their nuclear weapons and called for the creation of international mechanisms that would oblige the nuclear powers to provide information about their nuclear weapons arsenals.

Moreover, Iran's nuclear arms control operations focused on pursuing diplomatic objectives that sought to prevent the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Islamic Iran's efforts to promote the establishment – and later, the execution – of a comprehensive international ban on nuclear weapons testing and the creation of a FMT dealing with states' past and future production of fissile materials, together with Iran's emphasis on the need to set up NWFZ or WMDFZ in various parts of the world,[62] including the Middle East and the Persian Gulf sub-region, all testified to the Islamic Republic's consistent diplomatic campaign against nuclear proliferation.

Stability also coloured Iran's objective-setting when it came to its own nuclear activities. The defence and promotion of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program constituted an inseparable part of Iranian nuclear diplomacy from the early 1980s and, from August 2002 onwards, undoubtedly became the most important endeavour of Iran's arms control policy as a whole. In the light of the existing evidence, it is highly probable that the leaders of the Islamic Republic – from Khomeini to Khatami – viewed nuclear arms control diplomacy not only as a means to protect and advance Iran's civilian nuclear projects but also as an instrument to cover and safeguard their attempts to obtain at least a nuclear weapons capability for their country. And while seeking to secure the Islamic Republic's own interests in the nuclear field, Iranian officials regularly portrayed their government as a defender of other developing countries' nuclear rights as well.

In the regional Middle Eastern context, there were two states that played a central role in the objective-setting of Islamic Iran's nuclear diplomacy. On the one hand, basically throughout 1979–2003, Iranian arms control officials were forced to

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[61] Here, too, the distinction between continuity and stability in Iran's objective-setting is artificial in the sense that it is based on the mere fact that, from the present study's perspective, the issues of post-September 11 Afghanistan and post-Saddam Iraq appeared late on the Iranian agenda.

concentrate on the potential threat posed to their country by Iraq's nuclear weapons aspirations. On the other hand, during that same period, the Iranians actively sought to draw international attention to the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons and constantly demanded the Jewish state's immediate accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear state.

The stability in the objective-setting of Iran's nuclear arms control operations was accompanied by a marked substantive continuity in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic argumentation. Iran's call for universal nuclear disarmament formed the overarching theme in the Iranian diplomatic language. The officials of the Islamic Republic constantly referred to the immorality of nuclear weapons and to the dangers posed by such armaments. Furthermore, Iranian authorities strongly rejected the major powers' nuclear policies and, both at the conceptional and the practical level, the military notions and doctrines dealing with nuclear weapons. And while the Iranians persistently emphasized the need for a world order free of nuclear armaments, their issue positions on partial nuclear arms control measures in global and regional contexts – ranging from questions such as nuclear testing and security assurances to NWFZ, the FMT, and Israel's nuclear weaponry – remained remarkably stable as well.

Another central characteristic of Iran's nuclear arms control argumentation was the division drawn between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear countries. In the Iranian view, the problem of nuclear weapons was caused by the major powers who sought to use their nuclear arsenals as instruments for the advancement of military and foreign policy objectives. While pointing out that such efforts merely fuelled nuclear arms racing and proliferation, the officials of the Islamic Republic also found it totally unacceptable that the very same countries that were constantly aiming to improve their nuclear weapons both in quantitative and qualitative terms tried to obstruct non-nuclear-weapon states' efforts to benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

Using article IV of the NPT as the centerpiece of their diplomatic argumentation, the Iranians vehemently defended developing countries' right to pursue comprehensive nuclear programs for peaceful purposes and regularly pointed out that the NPT actually obliged developed countries to assist Third World states, both technically and financially, to implement national nuclear projects. Finally, the authorities of the

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[62] As already discussed above, the authorities of post-Pahlavi Iran also adopted the notion of zones of peace – and especially the idea of the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean – as part of their nuclear arms control objective-setting.

Islamic Republic repeatedly accused the major powers of pursuing a policy of double standard in the area of nuclear arms control.

As for Iran's own nuclear program, throughout 1979–2003, the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control diplomacy rested on two key argumentative pillars. For one thing, Iranian representatives stressed that their country's nuclear intentions were purely peaceful. Alluding to religious, moral, and humanitarian factors, the Iranians assured that their country would never pursue nuclear weapons. For another thing, the authorities of the Islamic Republic strongly condemned the international control measures that stood in the way of Iranian nuclear projects' smooth execution. Iranian officials portrayed such measures as manifestations of the injustice that characterized international relations and, more narrowly, of the injustice in the area of nuclear arms control between the nuclear-haves and the nuclear have-nots.

The continuity in the Islamic Republic's objective-setting and diplomatic argumentation was maintained, above all, by the nuclear status quo in Iran's external environment. In the global arena, the major powers, even after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, continued to be uninterested in giving up their nuclear armaments which they viewed as important protectors of their security and foreign policy influence. Accordingly, in the time period under consideration, achievements in global nuclear arms control remained limited and the issues on the international nuclear arms control agenda continued to be characterized by a long life-cycle.

Regionally, the Islamic Republic was surrounded by states that already possessed nuclear arms or aspired to acquire them. In addition, the persistent instability and insecurity in Iran's regional environment created a reality in which there were dim prospects for regional nuclear arms control arrangements. Naturally, the continuity in Islamic Iran's objective-setting and diplomatic argumentation was sustained by domestic Iranian considerations as well. Thus, the lessons drawn from the Iran–Iraq war, the Islamic Republic's determination to pursue a comprehensive national nuclear program, together with the Iranian leaders' military and foreign policy aspirations, also played a significant role in maintaining stability and continuity in Islamic Iran's nuclear arms control operations.

As for the means of the Iranian operations, they mostly consisted of participation in multilateral diplomatic deliberations on nuclear arms control. Given that in many cases dormancy was the key feature of such deliberations, formal diplomacy played a

secondary role in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic activities. However, it was not totally absent from Iran's nuclear arms control operations. Thus, the Islamic Republic took actively part in the negotiations on the CTBT and signed the treaty in September 1996. The Iranians were also actively involved in the multilateral talks on the creation of an international convention controlling fissile materials which, nonetheless, soon ran into a diplomatic cul-de-sac. And in 2003, in the course of the diplomatic crisis over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, Iran yielded to the IAEA's request to amend its safeguards agreement with the agency, agreed on the so-called Tehran Declaration with the EU trio of France, Germany, and Britain, and signed the IAEA additional protocol.

Iran's nuclear arms control operations relied on unilateral measures and bilateral diplomacy as well. As for the former, in 1991 the Islamic Republic declared that it would allow the IAEA to visit any location in Iran in order to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear activities.[63] And as already demonstrated above, the Islamic Republic resorted to unilateral declarations and initiatives also in the context of its missile policy and in connection with its diplomatic arm-wrestling with the U.S. administration of president George W. Bush over the Iranian nuclear program. Furthermore, throughout the 1979–2003 period, Iran tried to pursue its nuclear arms control objectives through bilateral diplomacy with individual governments and with the IAEA.

The means employed by the Islamic Republic in its nuclear arms control operations show that the radicalism-pragmatism dichotomy put forth by the proponents of the three era thesis is more or less useless in the analysis of the methods employed by Iran in its nuclear arms control operations – as well as in the other three thematic areas of its arms control policy. Right from the start, the leaders of post-Pahlavi Iran pursued their arms control objectives first and foremost within the existing international arms control arenas and instruments. In addition, when Tehran's needs so dictated, Iranian officials showed great flexibility in selecting the means by which to advance the Islamic Republic's nuclear interests.

At the same time, however, the radicalism-pragmatism dichotomy is of some relevance when it comes to post-revolutionary Iran's nuclear arms control argumentation and objectives. As for the former, there was a recognizable trend of moderation in the Islamic Republic's diplomatic language between 1979–2003. During the Islamic Republic's first decade, certain aspects of Iran's nuclear arms control

operations were characterized by a radical, ideologically laden diplomatic language which, however, lost its edge as the Islamic Republic moved into the post-war era. The presidency of Muhammad Khatami reinforced the trend of moderation in Islamic Iran's diplomatic language, even if, overall, the changes in the Islamic Republic's nuclear argumentation were minor and had no impact on the remarkable continuity in the substantive core of that argumentation.

As far as role of ideological considerations in Iran's objective-setting in the area of nuclear arms control was concerned, the ideological element, too, reached its peak in importance during the Khomeini years, as suggested by the three era thesis. From the Rafsanjani presidency onwards, however, the role of the ideological element remained basically constant and concerned certain individual Iranian objectives that exhibited major continuity in the 1979–2003 period. In this sense, then, the explanatory power of the three era thesis remained low.

6.5.5 Final remarks

An analysis of stability and change in the level of effort in post-revolutionary Iran's arms control operations can focus, on the one hand, on Iranian activities within a single thematic area of arms control and, on the other hand, on the Islamic Republic's arms control policy as a whole. When it comes to Iran's activities in the specific field of conventional arms control, it is difficult to identify significant changes in the level of effort in the Iranian actions. Minor nuances aside, post-revolutionary Iran's conventional arms control policy was characterized by stability in this respect as well.

During the Islamic Republic's first decade, Iranian officials were occupied with the formulation of new policies for their country and with the dangers and challenges posed by the conflict with Iraq. The fact that the end of the Iran–Iraq war did not result in a peace treaty sustained a dangerous constellation between the two countries in the post-war era, which, in turn, together with the question of foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf, had a direct impact on Iran's conventional arms control operations.

The Gulf conflict of 1990–1991 and its consequences also strongly influenced the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control diplomacy in the post-Iran–Iraq war period. Similarly, under the Rafsanjani presidency, Iranian authorities had to deal with the ramifications of the end of the Cold War and with increased multilateral diplomatic

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[63] Consequently, the nuclear agency conducted special visits to Iran in 1992, 1993, 1997, and 2000.

activities in the area of conventional arms control. The Islamic Republic maintained an active diplomatic course also during the Khatami administration which laid strong emphasis on détente and confidence-building in the Persian Gulf and additionally had to respond to the ascendancy of the micro-disarmament debate which started to heavily color multilateral conventional arms control deliberations from the mid-1990s onwards.

In contrast to the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control diplomacy, there was a clear pattern of change in the level of effort in post-Pahlavi Iran's chemical arms control operations. Understandably, the Iranian operations were at their most intense during the Iran–Iraq war. After the war, the intensity of Iran's chemical diplomacy cooled down, but Iranian officials remained still highly active, for the leaders of the Islamic Republic continued to be concerned over Iraq's chemical weapons and hoped to see the creation of the planned CWC. The opening of the convention for signature in January 1993, preceded by the UN-sanctioned chemical disarmament of Iraq following the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, marked the beginning of the third, a more relaxed phase in post-revolutionary Iran's chemical arms control operations. Iraq disarmed and a landmark international arms control agreement in place, the officials of the Islamic Republic focused on promoting Tehran's interests within the CWC framework.

There was an identifiable pattern of change in the level of effort of post-Pahlavi Iran's biological arms control operations, too. During the Islamic Republic's first decade, biological arms control played a marginal role in Iranian diplomacy. Essentially, the function of Iran's biological arms control operations in that period was to support the Islamic Republic's diplomatic campaign against Iraq's chemical warfare. But following the war, Iran's biological arms control diplomacy started to find its own identity. The September 1991 BTWC review conference, taking place after the momentous 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, constituted an important watershed in this respect. The conference started a new phase in multilateral diplomatic efforts against biological weapons and thereby also intensified Iranian operations in the area of biological arms control.

This distinctly active period of the Islamic Republic's biological diplomacy included Iranian participation in the work of VEREX, in the September 1994 BTWC special conference, in the BTWC review conference of 1996, and, most importantly, in the AHG process of 1995–2001. However, as the U.S. government of George W. Bush rejected the planned BTWC protocol in July 2001, multilateral diplomatic efforts in the area of biological arms control suffered a dramatic setback. The diplomatic paralysis

that ensued had a direct impact on Iran's biological arms control operations. A new phase, tinged with by stagnation and anticipation, entered the Iranian diplomacy.

As was the case with the Islamic Republic's conventional arms control operations, in terms of the level of effort, Iran's nuclear diplomacy was markedly stable. Given the tremendous destructive power of nuclear weapons and the role they played in the major powers' military and foreign policies, and given the fact that post-revolutionary Iran soon found itself in a war against Iraq and that the leaders of post-Pahlavi Iran decided to pursue a national nuclear power program, the issue of nuclear armaments was heavily present in Iranian diplomacy already during the Islamic Republic's first decade.

Iranian officials were closely involved in multilateral deliberations on nuclear arms control also in the post-war era. Under the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies, Iran sought to promote its interests in a broad range of issues and diplomatic processes. Ultimately, however, the stability in the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms control operations was dramatically shaken by the crisis that developed between Iran and the international community over the Iranian nuclear program in 2003. As a result of the new circumstances faced by the leaders of the Islamic Republic, Iranian officials were forced to step up their already active nuclear arms control operations. In fact, the urgency and the importance of the nuclear issue produced a situation in which one sector of Iranian diplomacy – arms control and expressely nuclear arms control – came to dominate the Islamic Republic's foreign policy as a whole.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that when it came to the level of effort of Iran's arms control operations, it was the issue of chemical weapons that dominated the Iranian operations during the post-Pahlavi Iran's first decade. The Iranians invested a lot of diplomatic resources also in the promotion of conventional arms control and, to a lesser degree, nuclear arms control objectives that specifically concerned the 1980–1988 war. Biological arms control, in turn, played only a marginal role in Iran's diplomacy in this period.

In the post-war era, chemical arms control continued to maintain its central position in the Iranian diplomacy, but following the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict and creation of the CWC, nuclear issues started to occupy a leading place in the Islamic Republic's arms control policy. Of course, this development reached its pinnacle in 2003 as Iran's nuclear program turned into a major issue on the international arms control agenda. In the post-Iran–Iraq war years, the Islamic Republic also placed increased emphasis on biological arms control. As for Iran's conventional arms control operations, their role

may have decreased in relation to the other areas of the Islamic Republic's arms control diplomacy during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies, but still remained a fixed part of Iran's foreign policy.

If there was a single theme that united the four individual areas of post-Pahlavi Iran's arms control policy, it was the Islamic Republic's dissatisfaction with the existing international reality. From Khomeini to Khatami, Iran's leaders viewed international politics as consisting of unjust and unequal relations between countries that wielded power and dominated the international scene and those which were the targets and victims of the major powers' foreign and military policies. In Iranian leaders' perception, the Islamic Republic was among the countries that were persistently on the defensive, that is, forced to defend themselves from the constant dangers and problems emanating from their external environments.

On the other hand, Iran's arms control operations of 1979–2003 also demonstrated that Iranian leaders were simultaneously seeking to bring about changes to the international reality they were so critical of. Although, in the final analysis, this aspect of Islamic Iran's arms control policy was overwhelmed by the uninterrupted flow of events and issues that required practical responses from the Iranians, the representatives of post-revolutionary Iran never ceased to challenge the existing international order. Not infrequently, the fusion of the reactive and proactive elements of the Islamic Republic's arms control policy led to situations where there was a gaping discrepancy between stated and actual Iranian policies.

But here, too, it was the unjust nature of international relations that explained everything. Even in the rare moments when Iranian representatives acknowledged that the Islamic Republic had not practiced what it had preached, they blamed other actors and external circumstances for their country's behaviour. Thus, the discontent that characterized post-Pahlavi Iran's arms control operations also conveniently transformed into an instrument to rationalize and legitimize the policies of the Islamic Republic. This was the other face of the Iranian diplomacy of discontent.

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C. Interviews and correspondence

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